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E V O L U T I O N  
of the  
D U T C H N A T I O N



E V O L U T I O N  
O F T H E  
D U T C H  
N A T I O N

*By*

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## FOREWORD

*In writing this history of the genesis and growth of the Dutch nation, I have assumed that the American reader would prefer to a mere narrative of Dutch history, an interpretation of the events and forces that brought the Dutch nation into being and determined its world-embracing activity in past ages and the present time. I have taken it for granted that the main facts of Dutch history are known to the American public. Many works of reference published in this country contain excellent chapters on the Netherlands, and P. J. Blok's "History of the People of the Netherlands" gives all the essential facts. Thus it is that many details familiar to the average reader or to be found in the works of John Lothrop Motley—the great American historian of the Netherlands—have been omitted.*

*An interpretation, as presented in this book, necessarily gives a personal view of historical events. Strive as we may to be objective, our vision of the past remains largely subjective. For my facts I have borrowed freely from modern Dutch historians, and in many cases I have adopted opinions already expressed by fellow countrymen. But, taken as a whole, the interpretation of Dutch history given in this book is mine and mine alone. This I would emphasize, for many of my colleagues may disagree with some of the opinions presented here, all the more so as I have often deviated from tradition.*

*My connection with the Department of Education of the Royal Netherland Government lends no special authority to my statements which are nothing but the personal opinions of a Dutch historian who, in time of war as in time of peace, has the right to express himself freely on his country's past. This personal note will not, I trust, deter the reader but rather arouse his interest in Dutch history and create a demand for further knowledge. If this should lead to the publication in English of other historical works on the Netherlands, the author will feel amply rewarded for his labors.*

B. H. M. VLEKKE.

*Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

*On the Day of the Liberation of Maastricht.*





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## INTRODUCTION

A HISTORY of the Netherlands must first explain how and why a Netherland nation came into being. It seems strange that in a tiny corner of the great plain of northwest Europe, open to invasion from all sides, there should exist a nation quite distinct from its far more powerful neighbors. It is even more remarkable that this small nation has proved strong enough to maintain itself as a separate political entity and to carry its own civilization to the far corners of the earth.

The European territory of the kingdom of the Netherlands covers only 13,700 square miles, an area about equal to that of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The country derives its name from its geographic location: "Nederland" is the *lowland* as opposed to the "*overland*," the high land of the interior. Originally the term was used in a vague sense. Siegfried, the hero of the Nibelungen epic, is called the "helt von Niderland" by a German poet of the early XIIIth century. Here, "Niderland" stands for the great plain of the lower Rhine, which the poet distinguishes sharply from the mountainous area of the middle Rhine, the scene of his hero's chief exploits. Gradually the meaning of the term was restricted to the delta of Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt, and in Dutch medieval chronicles these lands are referred to as the "low lands along the sea," our "Low Countries."

The medieval scribe who, around 1350, styled himself the "cleric from the low lands along the sea," recognized as his fatherland only the country of Holland, a narrow strip of land from the mouth of the Scheldt to the Zuiderzee. Even a century later, the name applied solely to the western coastal provinces of Belgium and of the Netherlands. Flanders, Brabant, Holland, and Utrecht were included, but the northeastern districts from Guelders to Groningen were considered definitely foreign. To the coastal inhabitants these districts were part of the "Overland" or "Oostland"—the great eastern plain between the Zuiderzee and the Oder—and their inhabitants spoke, not the vernacular "Dutch," but a foreign tongue, the "Low Saxon" or "Overlandish." In the XVIth century the union of the present states of the Netherlands and Belgium was realized. From then on, the name of "Netherlands" or "Low Countries" is applied to the whole of that area, and the latter term even now indicates the *combined* territory of *both* states. The name "Netherlands" was first used politically in 1539. As at that time most historians wrote in Latin, a classical form had to be devised.

The name "Belgica," once applied by the Romans to the lands that lie between the Seine and the Rhine had remained in ecclesiastical use until late in the Middle Ages. Humanistic studies brought revived interest in the pre-medieval history of the northern countries and from Caesar's narrative of his bitter battles with the "Belgae," the name "Belgica" was re-introduced, to indicate the Low Countries.

In the century that saw the union of the "low lands" and the "overland" a religious and political conflict broke out and led to the separation of the northern from the southern half of the Low Countries. *The northern section retained the historical name of the Netherlands.* Latin writers gradually replaced the name "Belgica" by that of "Batavia," introduced from Tacitus. For another two centuries the southern section remained officially nameless, but it received the political denomination "Belgium" after gaining its independence in 1830. In both countries there was a tendency, however, to substitute the name of one province for that of the whole. During the Middle Ages in the southern section, the province of Flanders so exceeded the others in trade and wealth, that "Flemings" became for a while the common name of all traders from the Low Countries. Italian historians called the eighty-years' war, the "guerra di Fiandra." *After the separation of the northern and southern Low Countries, "Flemings" remained the common term for all Dutch-speaking people in the southern part and during the XIXth century they adopted this name as their own.*

In the northern section, the province of Holland far surpassed the others, especially in commerce and shipping. Thus the northern Netherlanders became known among foreign nations as "Hollanders," and from abroad the term found its way into the Netherlands. Napoleon Bonaparte, whose geographical terminology was always loose, gave the title "King of Holland" to his brother Louis. Thereafter the name Holland was commonly used among Netherlanders themselves, but on the restoration of Dutch independence, the historical term Netherlands, in its traditional plural form, was revived for official use.

As has been said, the Netherlands have no geographical boundaries to the south or the east. There is little racial difference between the Netherlanders and their neighbors either on the continent or in Britain. The Dutch language holds an intermediate position between English and High German. In Friesland, a language is spoken that has close affinity to old Anglo-Saxon. In other districts the local dialect approaches the Low German of the adjacent provinces of Germany.

So the name Netherlands indicates that the genesis of the Netherland nation must be sought in the districts bordering the sea, and that their political and cultural characteristics were gradually extended to the east. Ac-

cordingly, the first part of this book will retrace this initial development and dwell upon the basic elements that made it possible. The second part will show how the Netherland nation, once it had found adequate political organization, extended its cultural and commercial activities over a large part of the world. The third section will describe how this same nation ceased to be a great power, and even was temporarily deprived of its political independence. Finally, how it asserted its right to free national existence and resumed its historic role of mediator between western and central Europe and even between the Occident and the Orient.

Geographic terminology concerning the Netherlands tends to be confusing and consistency in the use of words is essential to any clear statement of historical development. In this book "Low Countries" will be applied only to the combined territory of the present kingdoms of the Netherlands and Belgium. The noun "Low Countries" badly needs an adjectival form, which unfortunately does not exist. The form "Lowland" seems the only possibility. The familiar adjective "Dutch" will never be used for the earlier period except to indicate the language of the western coastlands both of Belgium and of Holland. After 1600 it may serve as a supplementary adjectival form to "Netherlands." "Netherlands" noun and "Netherland" adjective refer always to the northern part of the Low Countries, that is to the present kingdom of the Netherlands. "Holland" indicates the *province of Holland*, never the whole of the Netherlands. The same is true of "Flanders" and "Flemish." These indicate the province of Flanders, except when used for the history of the last century. In the latter case they refer to the "Dutch" speaking people of the kingdom of Belgium.

"Batavia," the Latin name for the Netherlands, was given in 1619 to the capital of the Dutch East Indian empire. To avoid confusion between the inhabitants of that city and the Netherlanders in Europe when referred to by their Latin name—as was usual at the time of the French revolution—the form "Batavi" will be used for the Germanic tribe of Roman days and that of "Batave," philologically more correct than "Batavian," for the republic in Europe. "Batavian" always indicates a connection with the capital of the East Indies.



## CHAPTER I

### The Genesis of a Country and of a People

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, whose inaccuracy in matters of geographical terminology has already been alluded to, once said that the Netherlands were nothing but "an alluvium of some of the principal rivers of his empire." Were it not for the silt carried down from the mountains by the Rhine and the Meuse, he asserted, Holland would not exist. This warping of geographical fact to serve an Imperial policy, is even more absurd than the widespread belief that the Netherlands won their place on earth by forcing back the ocean and turning the sea into habitable land.

Yet both stories contain an element of truth. The rivers did contribute to the building of Netherland soil; and when that soil seemed doomed to disappear in the tremendous floods of the early Middle Ages, the engineering skill of the early inhabitants saved at least part of it from destruction. Little by little the Netherlands made their sea-battered land into a well fortified bastion from which time and again they have sallied forth to re-occupy lost positions. The greatest of these counterattacks was the twentieth century draining of the Zuiderzee. The truth is that the Netherlands were born of the sea. Nature not Man made it and later sought its destruction.

At the beginning of the Pleistocene a slight elevation of the land caused a withdrawal of the waters of the North Sea, which covered all of the Low Countries, to a line running north of the Doggerbank from what is now the mouth of the Humber in England to Cape Skagerrak. Britain and the Continent were then one. The Rhine, of which the Meuse, the Scheldt, the Thames, and the Humber were mere affluents, pursued its course in a general northwestern direction. Upon this barren ground the Rhine and Meuse began to build the soil of the Netherlands. Then came the third European glacial period which was the only one that affected the Low Countries. It moulded parts of the Netherlands soil into shape. Enormous masses of ice, descending from the mountains of Scandinavia, Scotland, and northern England, covered the present area of the North Sea as well as the northern section of the Low Countries, and extended to a line running from a point south of Haarlem, over Utrecht and Nijmegen, to Krefeld in the Rhineland. Moving to the southwest the ice carried stones and sand from Scan-

dinavia, supplying material for the sandy plains of the Dutch provinces of Guelderland, Overijssel, and Drente. Ice pressure moulded that material into its present form and built the ranges of low hills later covered by forests, which now provide recreation areas for the crowded population of Holland. The ice caused a still more momentous change in the geography of the country. It acted as a dam to the waters of the Rhine and Meuse, forcing them to flow west. Thus the parallel rivers in the central Netherlands came into existence, and we shall see how deeply this geographical formation has influenced the fate of the Netherlands people. A third result of the glacial period was the formation of a long narrow strip of loess along the southern rim of the ice. This belt of loess soil, which passes through the modern kingdom at its southernmost point, well provided with water in the valleys, has a prairie-like plateau. It provided a natural highway along which primitive man moved from east to west. In modern times, it has served as an invasion route for great armies.

In the era following the third glacial, colder and warmer periods alternated. In the colder ages, the sea withdrew to its old shores far to the north, and the Low Countries merged again into the huge plains that spread from Wales to Russia, while in the warmer ages the sea reoccupied its lost territories and submerged the northern Netherlands up to the sandy hills of its eastern districts. In both cases nature continued to build, slowly but surely, the soil of the country.

The *fourth* glacial period in Europe, which is supposed to have reached its lowest line about 20,000 B.C., never touched the Low Countries, but turning the northern European plain into an endless tundra, caused a gradual shifting of animal life to the south. The mammoth herds which had grazed on the steppes of northeastern Netherlands made place for the reindeer, which alone of all animals could find its food on the tundra. Where the mammoth went, the most primitive type of man, the "Neanderthaler," usually followed. So far there is no evidence that he ever lived in the Netherlands; but his tools have been found in the southern Low Countries on the outskirts of the sandy plains of Brabant and Limburg.<sup>1</sup>

With the reindeer came reindeer-hunters, men of the Cro-magnon race. Their presence in some parts of eastern Netherlands seems well established. They too, made their homes at the edge of the sandy areas, on the outskirts of the Veluwe and the plains of Drente, high enough to be protected against floods, yet close to fresh water. There is no reason to assume that they ever left the country, and they may be counted as the earliest ancestors of the present people of the Netherlands.

After the last glacial period the climate of northwestern Europe grew steadily warmer. The melting of the ice freed enormous masses of water,



the sea-level rose, and an extremely slow but steady sinking of the land began. It continues in our day at the rate of one millimeter, say the twenty-fifth of an inch, every year. That seemed to doom the as yet unborn country of the Netherlands. Then nature intervened to provide defenses against the dangers it had created. Around 5000 B. C., if we may accept the word of some geologists, the sea again covered the whole of the present provinces of Zeeland, Holland, Utrecht and part of Friesland and Groningen. It may have flooded part of the low, sandy plains of Brabant and reached the sites in Belgian Limburg where prehistoric man was living. Vague reminiscences of the event may be traced in the medieval legends that describe Tongeren, far inland in Belgian Limburg, as having been a coastal village in the remote past. This same flood caused a momentous and lasting change in the geography of western Europe by opening the straits of Dover and turning the low valley between the chalk cliffs of Kent and Artois into an arm of the sea. Once currents of the ocean had found their way into the North Sea, they swept everything in their path. Sand was taken up in the middle of the channel and deposited, in long soft curves, along its eastern bank. Here the prevailing west winds massed it along the shore of the sea in a long, uninterrupted line of dunes. Holland's Westwall had been created.

The sea behind the row of dunes became a lagoon. This rapidly filled with peat after the salt water had been changed into fresh by influx from the rivers. The Rhine and Meuse sought new outlets. Their many branches, winding through the moor, provided the routes along which the inhabitants of the eastern sands traveled to the western dunes. Instead of an unidentifiable fragment of the vast plain of the northwest, the future Netherlands had become a corner of the continent, and a stepping stone for migrating peoples. With Britain an island on the other side, the North Sea was no longer a barrier, but a broad highway continued to the east by the rivers Rhine and Meuse.

The frequent changes in the formation of the soil must have made the northern Low Countries a rather difficult place for the primitive peoples of Europe to settle. The southern part, present day Belgium, was full of life in the later palaeolithic and the early neolithic ages. The northern part seems to have been desolate and deserted, although it is probable that remnants of the older population still clung to the higher portion of the partly drowned land. In the south prehistoric settlements existed where medieval towns later rose to fame, conclusive evidence of continuity of habitation and culture. In only one place did this early neolithic population spill over the present Dutch-Belgian boundary. In the extreme southeast, around Maastricht, an abundant supply of flint is found; and flint was to neolithic

man what iron is to us. Traces of shallow mine pits and enormous quantities of flint fragments show that a regular industry of stone tools was located here.

Archeologists have identified two main groups of inhabitants in the Netherlands during the second millennium before Christ. One center of habitation was the plains of Drente, now a rather desolate province of modern Netherland; another, the fertile loess soil of southern Limburg, one of the most favored districts of the country. The two groups were racially distinct—the men of Drente were dolichocephal, the men of Limburg brachycephal. That distinction persists to this day and the boundary between the two racial groups roughly coincides with the belt of parallel rivers in the middle of the country. More interesting is the difference in civilization between the two peoples. These ancient "Netherlanders" were by no means totally barbarians. They were agricultural peoples and had fixed residences. Those of the south built their cabins close together on elevated spots and surrounded their settlements with walls and moats. Those of the north left the only megalithic monuments preserved in the northern Low Countries. Two rows of large stones were placed upright to form a narrow passage, covered by other stones placed on top. One end was closed by a huge boulder, the other left open. But a small wall of stones kept the space immediately in front of the entrance free. Then the whole structure, except for the narrow space before the entrance, was covered with soil. Thus an artificial rock chamber was built. Like the chambers excavated in the hillsides of Egypt and North Africa, the megalithic constructions of Drente served as burying places for the dead. To these monuments the name "Hunebeds," or "giant beds," has been given.

The tools and ceramics of these two groups and a comparison of their buildings with those in other European areas suggest that both found their origin, if not racially at least culturally, in the lands around the Mediterranean. In both cases, the facts suggest a limited migration of individuals as well as a current of civilization. From their earliest homes on the plains of Drente, the Hunebed-builders moved to the range of dunes beyond the marshes of the lagoon. Evidence of habitation, only slightly later than that in Drente, has been found near Alkmaar, in the northern sector of the dunes. It is quite possible that this same people also spread to the southwest where the borderland of the Veluwe, close to fertile and rich river valleys, provided excellent living conditions. From the sea to the eastern corner of the present provinces of Overijssel, huge peat marshes extend along the present Netherland-German boundary. Farther south, a wide gap between the moors and the great rivers leaves the way free for invaders. There is ample proof that in prehistoric and early historic times, constant immigra-

tion from the east took place. If our interpretation of the archeological evidence is correct, hunter tribes of the later neolithic period—say around 1500 B. C.—migrated from the plains of southern Russia over Hungary and Czechia to the upper Danube and from there moved west to the Low Countries. Through the gap in the natural boundaries, they penetrated into the Low Countries to settle on the sandy plain of the Veluwe, whence some of them continued their wanderings to Britain across the yet shallow Straits of Dover.

A dryer period followed the moist era in which the rising sea level and the opening of the Straits of Dover had successively submerged the Netherlands and provided for their protection by creating the western shore line. For several centuries, the moors behind the dunes, formed when the lagoon filled up with peat, were covered with a hard dry surface that gave more freedom of movement to the inhabitants. The sea, its level perhaps ten feet lower than at present, was not yet a threat to the new land. The western dunes, then several miles farther west, enclosed an area thousands of square miles larger than modern Netherland.

The traditional picture of man's progress presumes a gradual evolution of culture from that of the stone age through a bronze age to the iron age. The bronze age is missing in the history of the Netherlands. Only a very few bronze tools and weapons have been found. Apparently the advent of the new material did not interfere with the continued use of stone for the same purposes and in the same areas of habitation. So we may assume that bronze came by a peaceful exchange of goods, and was not brought by a migrating horde or a conquering people of a higher cultural level.

There was also a change in religious customs, and for their funeral rites the ancient inhabitants of the Low Countries gradually adopted cremation instead of inhumation. There is no definite proof that the change in burial rites was accompanied by a change in population, but it was an innovation of great importance, for the burial of the dead near the homes of the living points to a belief in the survival of spiritual force within the body after death, while cremation obviously aims at the immediate liberation of the spirit from the body.

The introduction of the new burial rite is often placed around 1200 B. C. about the time of the first bronze tools. Around 1000 B. C., iron was introduced—again, it would seem, by way of peaceful trading though our evidence is of the scantiest. Thus, the principal cultural changes had been initiated even before the great immigrations of the last centuries before Christ that definitely shaped the racial character of the Netherland people. To the three racial groups already mentioned, two new elements were added. From the northeast came Germanic tribes, from the southeast

Celtic clans. The river belt of the center formed a barrier which, for a century or more, kept Celtic and Germanic tribes apart. Contrary to tradition, the Germanic invaders were the first to settle in the Low Countries. They did not appear until several centuries after the beginning of the Iron Age—how *many* centuries is uncertain. In the five centuries preceding the birth of Christ, three great waves of Germanic immigration swept over the Low Countries. The oldest, which some archeologists name the Proto-Saxon, extended only over the sandy plains of the east and center. It preceded the invasion of the south by Celtic tribes. The second wave, far stronger than the first, belongs to the fourth and third centuries, and spread over the lowlands of the former lagoon as well as over the plains of the east. It crossed the river belt into the southern part, where it absorbed the earlier Celtic population. Thus the tribes of the Belgae, Germanic peoples with Celtic elements and Celtic culture, who were to be Caesar's most ferocious foes, appeared in the Low Countries. The third Germanic immigration took place in historic times, and is connected with the history of the occupation of the Low Countries by the Romans.

These four waves of immigration—one Celtic and three Germanic—within four centuries or less, justify the assumption of a marked increase in the population of the Low Countries. There are indications that the first two immigrations, the first Germanic and the Celtic one, were not very important as far as numbers are concerned. The earliest Germanic inhabitants settled in exactly the same districts as the primitive inhabitants of the Netherlands, to whom they were closely related racially. An increase of population may be assumed from the wide extent of their burial grounds, but there was little if any change in customs or civilization. The Celts did not penetrate into the western part of the country. They settled on both sides of the Meuse, as far north as the present town of Nijmegen, and in eastern Brabant.

The climate period of the sub-Atlanticum had begun. This, combined with the effects of an increase in rainfall, a rising sea level, a gradual sinking of the soil, tended to make the former lagoon behind the dunes once more uninhabitable. As long as there was room in the eastern part of the country, the west did not have any settlers. Indeed, the fact that there *was* room in the eastern section, although it had been inhabited from the earliest times, is sufficient proof that the number of early Celtic and Germanic invaders can not have been great. As regards the Germanic invasion, we can imagine small clans of agricultural people coming in quest of new farm lands; as regards the Celts, they were bands of proud warriors, seeking to extend their rule over less civilized tribes. The civilization of the Netherlands Celts was that of the Halstatt period. The ornaments and weapons

found in some of their burial mounds suggests wealth and craftsmanship far above that of their northern neighbors.

More important was the second Germanic invasion, that must have taken place in the third and second centuries before Christ. Its route can be traced back to Central Germany. They were so numerous that, in dire need of land, they invaded and conquered part of the lands of the Celts in the southeast and settled in the marshy land between the higher ground in the east and the dunes in the west. Their civilization was lower than that of the Celts though slightly higher than that of their Germanic predecessors. They were the first to take up the struggle with the sea—which, helped by climatic changes, had begun its assault on the Netherlands from the west. In the northern part, the present provinces of Groningen and Friesland, the marshy land behind the dunes provided excellent meadows in summer time. To safeguard themselves and their cattle against the treacherous floods, the new inhabitants threw up large low mounds, flat on top, to serve as places of refuge. With the increase of population, reinforced perhaps by immigration from the northeast, these mounds or “terps” made permanent settlement possible. As the threat from the sea became more alarming in the course of time, the height and size of the “terps” were increased. For a thousand years and more, until the first dykes were built, they were the only safe places of habitation in that part of the country. Because of the periodic raising of the terp-level, the various strata of habitation have been perfectly preserved, and these artificial hills have become veritable treasure-troves for archeologists. Before it was leveled in modern times, the largest of these terps was twenty feet high and covered an area of thirty-seven acres. Like the hill of ancient Troy, some terps contained seven layers of archeological evidence.

These settlers of terp-land were the ancestors of the Frisians. As they settled in uninhabited territory, they preserved a far greater degree of racial purity than their fellow tribesmen who migrated into the central and southern section of the country where they strongly influenced but did not supersede the older population. In Belgium, the invasion of these tribes caused a cultural decline. Roman historians stress the fact that the ancient Belgae were of low culture and more barbarous than all other inhabitants of Gaul, and the contents of their early burial grounds confirm that view.

Thus, Germanic tribes occupied nearly all the Netherlands at the beginning of the second century before Christ. A second Celtic migration, often connected with the spreading of the La Tène civilization of the later Iron Age, touched the Netherlands only in some districts of the southwest and at the extreme southeastern point, in southern Limburg where the loess lands provided a natural highway. For the most part the lowlands of the present

province of Holland were still uninhabited. Along the dunes, on the loam ground in the north, and on the sandy plains of the east, fishermen, cattle-breeders and farmers made their living as they do today, and even the dwellings of the wealthier among these early inhabitants of the Low Countries were probably not unlike those still seen in the poorer part of the country half a century ago. This was the situation in the Netherlands when they were "discovered" by the pioneers of Mediterranean civilization.<sup>2</sup>

About 325 B. C., a Greek navigator, Pytheas of Marseilles, undertook the exploration of the western coast of Europe which was then virtually unknown. A century before, Herodotus had given a vague description of these far western lands, renowned for the tin and amber they produced. The Carthaginians had traded on the west coast of Europe, but the geographical information they possessed was not available to the Greeks, their constant rivals and relentless foes. Aristotle knew northwestern Europe only as the "Keltika"—the land of the Celts—for in his time the Celtic expansion was at its peak and the Celts controlled all trade routes from the Baltic and North Sea to the Mediterranean. Pytheas' exploration of the sea route to the northern countries was intended to neutralize Celtic predominance and to wrest from them the amber trade. Had he succeeded in opening a practicable sea route around western Europe, he would have been able to divert this entire trade to his native city of Marseille. But his attempt proved premature, as the distance and dangers of the voyage were too great to permit regular trips. Pytheas reached the coast of Britain, whence he proceeded to the Netherlands. Passing the mouth of the Rhine, he followed the coast to northern Germany. He penetrated beyond the area of farthest Celtic expansion, and described the country as inhabited by "Skuthai"—the Scyths—a general term used by the Greeks to designate all peoples of northeastern Europe, from Scandinavia to the Caucasus.

Pytheas' work of exploration was not continued by later generations. The name of the river Rhine is first mentioned in ancient literature by Cicero in his oration against Lucius Piso. Caesar's expeditions to the land of the Belgae marked the beginning of direct contact between the still backward peoples of the Netherlands and the highly civilized Mediterranean world. Caesar himself never visited the northern part of the Low Countries. In his war with the Menapii, probably one of the few remaining Celtic clans on the lower Meuse, he partially penetrated a densely wooded marshland, which some identify with the moors of the Peel in northeastern Brabant. Caesar left the conquest of the northeastern section of Gaul uncompleted, the boundary only vaguely defined and nowhere defended. To finish the work of his predecessor was one of the tasks of Octavius Augustus, the first emperor.

Drusus, the stepson of Augustus, came to the lower Rhine to take command over the armies that had been assembled for the conquest of Germany as far as the Elbe. The valleys of the affluents of the Rhine formed natural invasion routes through the wild, heavily wooded country; and by sea, the Roman galleys could reach the Elbe and thus penetrate into the heart of the enemy country. Drusus worked methodically. Large forces were gathered in fortified camps at points of strategic interest. The defenses between these camps were strengthened by settling German mercenaries on the left bank of the Rhine. These mercenaries migrated to their new homes with their families. With the assistance of the Romans they brought large tracts of wild land under cultivation. One of these tribes, the Batavi, was destined to become famous in Netherland history. This settlement of mercenary tribes constituted the third wave of Germanic immigration. The Batavi owed their land and most of what they possessed to the Romans. Remains of their dwellings and implements found in modern times confirm the references of Roman authors who pictured this Germanic tribe as deeply influenced by Roman civilization. Until their arrival, the districts between the rivers had been avoided because of the marshy nature of the soil. Drusus built a highway along the lower Rhine, and this served as a rude dyke sufficient to resist at least the minor floods. Scattered through the country along this road, the Batavi threw up low mounds not unlike the terps of the north, but less high. Upon these they built their farmhouses and, as a last refuge for men and beasts in times of floods or wars, they raised a primitive castle on one of the hills near Nijmegen.

The fortified "island of the Batavi"—as the land between the rivers was then called—formed a secure basis for Roman military operations. The Frisians of the terp-land, well provided with cattle and familiar with the creeks and inland waters of the north, were also pressed into service. Once these preparations were completed the Roman navy began to explore the dangerous shores of the North Sea. The Roman galleys, however, were ill-suited for navigation on its rough waters, and although the attempt was repeated several times, the fleet hardly ever succeeded in penetrating farther than the mouth of the Ems.

The northern Netherlands continued to serve as an operational base for the Romans until 16 A. D., when Tiberius ordered these wars brought to an end. At once the Roman hold over the tribes north of the great rivers weakened. The Frisians became restless, and in 28 A. D. drove the Roman tax collectors from their country. The authority of Rome was temporarily restored twenty years later after a vigorous campaign in preparation for which new fortifications and camps were built. One of these is now the city of Utrecht. The troops were again withdrawn south of the Rhine

by order of the emperor Claudius, and thus this military event would not be worth mentioning were it not that the elder Pliny served with the Roman legions. Later, when he wrote his "*Naturalis Historia*" and the "Chronicles of His Own Time," he could describe the Netherlands and their inhabitants from personal observation, and from him Tacitus derived much information on the history of the Batavi. The end of the Germanic wars did not lessen the strategic value of the "island of the Batavi" to the Romans. Shortly thereafter, the conquest of Britain was undertaken; and in this enterprise the Batavi again took a great part. New military works, thrown up immediately behind the dunes, served to secure safe and easy communications between the great military centers on the Rhine and the ports of embarkation at the mouth of the Scheldt.

The Romans set little store by the marshlands of the west and the north of the Low Countries which held no allure for them. They preferred to tread on more solid ground. Even for maintaining communications between Britain and the lower Rhine, the land route from Boulogne to Cologne seemed to them safer than the sea route by the mouth of the Rhine. One great highway they built in the Low Countries, running from Cologne through Aachen and Tongeren to Bavai in northern France, and on to the sea coast. This road partly followed the stretch of loess land already mentioned as the great thoroughfare of northwestern Europe. North and south of this road, thousands of Roman veterans settled. With the Romanized nobility of the Belgae, they formed a class of landowners, residing on large estates on which they kept numerous bondsmen, probably poorer members of the Belgian tribes or descendants of the aboriginal population. On these estates they built spacious and luxurious villas, often provided with central heating, a current of hot air circulating under the floors and inside the walls of the rooms. The smaller of these estates covered about 650 acres. Numbers of Roman villas were excavated in the last century; and the "tumuli" of the lords of these estates, high burial mounds resembling flattened cones still stand southwest of the Belgian town of Tongeren. That town was the metropolis of the southeastern Netherlands and adjacent Belgium during the first and second centuries of our era. Far outside its present precincts, remnants of Roman walls indicate that in those days it was a large city some three and a half miles in circumference. Of the modern kingdom of the Netherlands, only southern Limburg formed part of the Romanized area.

The highway from Tongeren to Bavai crossed the Meuse close to the spot where a fortified village had stood ever since the neolithic age. That village may have been razed and ruined by Celtic and Germanic invasions but the place remained inhabited, and at the crossing of the river a new



village always rose and finally grew into the town of Maastricht. Farther east, the highway followed roughly the valley of the Geul, a small affluent of the Meuse. Still farther east, the road bent to the northeast, passed by the place where now the mining center of Heerlen flourishes.

The building of this highway and the Roman colonization along its track was one of the most important events in Netherland history. It determined the farthest extent of Germanic influence in the northwestern corner of the European continent, and fixed for thousands of years to come the dividing line between Romanic and Germanic peoples in this area. The inhabitants of present Flanders, Brabant, and Holland continued to live under Roman rule in the same condition of culture as in the centuries before that rule was instituted. A trickle of Roman relics, found along the banks of some of the small rivulets that wind through the moors and heaths of Flanders and Brabant, reveals the occasional visits of itinerant traders. A bag of Roman coins found in the "Haarlemmermeer" when this inland sea was drained in the nineteenth century suggests the shipwreck of a Roman vessel. A high burial mound on one of the northwestern islands, close behind the dunes, indicates that here a Roman naval commander met his death and was buried by the sailors of his squadron. Isolated finds tell of minor dramatic events; but with the sole exception of the island of the Batavi, the area northwest of the great highway was a no man's land for the Romans. Along the road and south of it they stretched forth their authority and imposed their customs and finally their language. Later Germanic invasions pushed the dividing line a little farther to the south in southern Limburg, but could not alter the general picture.

Only one center of Roman civilization was established north of the highway in the Netherlands, the present town of Nijmegen, founded close to the ruins of the older castle of the Batavi. This is associated with the extension of the line of fortifications from the Rhine to the sea after the great revolt of the Batavi. In the general history of the Roman empire, this revolt is of slight importance, nor did it alter or even influence the course of Netherland history for the extension of Roman military occupation along the banks of the Netherland rivers was without lasting effect. Yet it has become one of the great traditional events of Netherland history. Our only source of information about the revolt is Tacitus, who based his narrative on the writings of the elder Pliny, and tells the story in great detail.

The Batavi, who had fought for the Romans in numerous wars, grew weary of constant military service. At first their loot from vanquished Germanic and Britannic foes enriched them. Later, even in times of peace, military service kept them away from home for years without sizeable profit. Claudius Civilis, a Batave officer of high rank in the Roman army,

conceived the idea of organizing the scattered forces of the less civilized Germanic warriors around men of his own tribe who had been trained in organized warfare. He believed that Roman power on the lower Rhine could be broken and a confederation of Germanic tribes established under the Batavi. The opportunity came after Nero's death, when civil war was devastating Italy.

The initial success exceeded all expectation. The Batavi serving in the Roman army supported their national leader and marched home to join the revolt. The fortified Roman camps of Xanten and Cologne were taken, some of the Belgian tribes forced into cooperation, and a national revolution fomented in eastern Gaul. The Romans, commanded by Petilius Cerealis had to fight every inch of their way back from Trier to the shores of the North Sea. Tacitus tells how the castle of the Batavi was set on fire by order of Civilis when all seemed lost, and archeological evidence corroborates his story. The ultimate fate of the crafty Batave leader is unknown. From that time, the Romans no longer trusted their allies, who seem, nevertheless, to have regained their privileges. Roman hold over the country was strengthened by the construction of a large fortified camp close to the spot where the castle of the Batavi had stood, the beginnings of the city of Nijmegen. This was the only lasting result of the revolt.

Civilis and his Batavi were completely forgotten during the Middle Ages, when the manuscripts of the works of Tacitus lay hidden and unheeded. After their re-discovery, Tacitus rapidly rose to fame among the Humanists of the XVIth century as a teacher of the way of life and the art of politics. Civilis and the Batavi shared in his fame. Humanists from the Netherlands eagerly grasped the opportunity to enhance the glory of their people and their country with the exploits of the adventurous officer and his clan of Germanic mercenaries. Gerard Geldenhauer of Nijmegen was among the first to write a panegyric of the ancient people, whom he proudly designated as the founders of his city and the defenders of his country's liberty. Erasmus liked to call himself a "Batave," the descendant of a more cultured and Latinized nation, whenever his colleagues from over the Rhine sought to appropriate him for the Germani. But the Batavi owe their *real* fame in Netherland history to Hugo Grotius. The great jurist of Delft was the first to interpret the revolt of the Batavi as the earliest Dutch war of freedom against tyranny. Thus, Civilis and the "leading men of the Batave tribe" of whom Tacitus had spoken, became the precursors of the burgher-aristocracy of the XVIIth century.

This version was soon adopted by the leading republicans of seventeenth-century Holland. Civilis and his "Batave liberty" became the watchword of the anti-Orangist movement of that period. The burgomasters of Amster-

dam adorned the City Hall with paintings of the ancient hero and his war with Rome. Rembrandt received a commission to paint the Batave leaders when they met to plan the uprisings. The artist, who had his own version of the story, pictured Civilis as a crafty and ruthless old man, arrayed with semi-barbaric splendor, scheming as he feasted among his knavish satellites. The burgomasters indignantly rejected a painting that departed so far from their own conception. What they wanted was a civilized Civilis of aristocratic mien, defying Roman tyranny, a noble character in a heroic attitude, un-historic perhaps, but politically more acceptable.

This official view of the Batave uprising became part of Dutch traditional historiography after 1754 when Johan Wagenaar, the historiographer of the burgher-aristocracy, inserted it in his monumental "Vaderlandsche historie." By the end of the XVIIIth century the burgher-aristocracy had lost all credit with the people; but Tacitus' description was sufficiently flexible to perpetuate the hero-worship of Civilis in the character of a democratic leader! Friedrich von Schiller glorified him in his "Abfall der Vereinigten Niederlande." "One single man born for the opportunities of his time," he writes, "revealed the dangerous latent power of popular hatred against tyranny." Sixty years later a Bostonian, John Lothrop Motley, deplored the fact that "the brave Batavi distinguished themselves in the (Roman) expeditions to crush the liberties of their Germanic kindred." Civilis, he says, although he had received a Roman education, "retained an unconquerable love for liberty and for his own race, and the spectacle of a brave nation inspired by the soul of one great man and rising against an overwhelming despotism will always speak to the heart, from generation to generation." For Schiller and Motley, the uprising of the Batavi foreshadowed the Eighty Years' War against the kings of Spain. Later textbooks of Dutch History, mostly condensations and revisions of Wagenaar's history, have made Civilis just as well known to Dutch school children as Rembrandt or Admiral de Ruyter.

After the large fortified camp near Nijmegen and a number of smaller forts along the southern bank of the Rhine had been built, a group of Roman traders settled near the river under their protection. No further colonization took place in the northern sector, but the presence of soldiers and merchants in the "island of the Batavi" during one hundred and sixty years of peace sufficed to imbue its population more deeply with Latin culture. Latin words, mostly household or building terms and names of plants or animals, entered the Germanic dialects spoken in the Low Countries. Roman examples were followed in the construction of farmhouses and in the manufacture of tools and implements.

This period of peace and quiet progress in the outward forms of civilization came to an end long before the total collapse of the Roman empire. In the turmoil of the barbaric invasions, which continued in the Low Countries from the early third to the sixth century, the people of the Batavi, and most of the other tribes mentioned by Roman historians, were overwhelmed. The Batave regiments of the Roman army survived, but fewer and fewer natives of the Low Countries served in them. About 250 A. D. the Rhine defenses were disrupted by a wild attack of Germanic invaders, plunderers and adventurers of many tribes. Where these bands passed—and some of them followed the highway from Cologne to Bavai—Latin civilization came to an end. The villas of southern Limburg were burned down, and archeologists have found the charred remnants of their substructure. In the first period of the invasion the heavy walls of Tongeren provided a sanctuary for refugees from the countryside; but about 275 A. D. this city too was looted and laid in ashes. On its ruins a new town was built, better fortified but only one-third as large. After this invasion the island of the Batavi was given up by the Roman army. Some inhabitants may have followed the withdrawing troops south of the great Calais-Cologne highway, but many preferred to stay in their own country although exposed to constant danger. Here the gravest threat to the inhabitants was not that of foreign marauders, but the growing violence of the waters.

Aggressors who lusted for plunder preferred the rich districts of Gaul to the marshlands of Holland, and they left their victims at least subsistence. The sea threatened to destroy the soil itself. Geographical evidence shows that around 300 A. D. the effects of the gradual elevation of the sea level began to affect the security of the lowland of Holland. The Straits of Dover had gradually widened and deepened so that larger masses of water flowed into the North Sea. Swept on by western winds, they battered the shorelines of the Low Countries. The dunes slowly gave way, pushed back by the pressure of the wind. In what is now the province of Zeeland, the shoreline was broken in many places, and the wide estuaries of the Scheldt were formed. Here the loss of land continued until a few centuries ago. From 300 A. D. until 900 A. D., the attack of the sea increased in violence. Whole districts east of the dunes became uninhabitable.

It is difficult to move a people from the land of its forebears, even if that land is in danger of being submerged. The inhabitants of Walcheren, Zeeland's most exposed island, for instance, are definitely the descendants of prehistoric people who settled on the same spot. The motto of Zeeland's coat of arms, "*Luctor et emergo*,"—"Through struggle I survive"—is no idle boast. The Frisians, by raising the level of their "terps," weathered

the storm. The Batavi may have been less fortunate. The rivers that enclosed their land no longer found easy outlets. To the danger of submergence by the sea was added the curse of yearly floods. Many Batavi were forced to seek new homes, either with the Romans south of the highway, or outside the military boundary of the empire on the sandy and marshy plains of Brabant.

So far this open space had attracted but few settlers. It was now occupied by groups of immigrants from the northeast. Some may have belonged to the Batavi; others came from over the Rhine. Together they are called "Franks" by the Roman historians, who distinguished them from the Franks along the lower Rhine by calling the former "Salian Franks," while the latter were known as Ripuarians. The inhabitants of the northern districts, because of the increased violence of the floods and of a small but constant influx of settlers from the east, were apparently forced to extend their settlements over the less desirable land between the Meuse and the Scheldt. These Salian Franks were at times a danger to the Roman empire, at times valuable allies. Against them Emperor Diocletian ordered the strengthening of the fortifications along the Calais-Cologne highway. Later these same fortifications were garrisoned by Franks who apparently served well and faithfully until the collapse of Roman authority. Where the Meuse crosses the highway, a strong bulwark was built and its remains can still be seen in the center of Maastricht. Beneath the walls of the bastion, a settlement of traders and peasants formed the beginning of that city.

Around these new fortifications Latin civilization survived for another century. Here, where Roman legions passed regularly on their way from Britain to the Rhine, where merchants from the Mediterranean ventured to barter with the barbarians, the first Christian communities of the Netherlands were organized. It is difficult to find traces of Christianity prior to 313, but excavations in Tongeren suggest that here as in the cities of the Rhine Christianity was professed long before it gained public recognition. Immediately after the decree of Constantine allowing public worship, the Christian communities of the lower Rhine and Meuse were organized under bishops, who took an active part in the theological controversies of their time, an indication that large communities existed before the decree was issued and were in close contact with the center of Christian life in Italy and the Near East. This latter connection is suggested by local legends attributing to the first bishops of the Rhine and Meuse districts an Armenian or Syrian origin.

One of these legends tells how Servatius, first bishop of Tongeren, sought safety from the barbarians within the walls of Maastricht where he died and was buried. Servatius defended anti-Arian doctrines at the Coun-

cil of Rimini in 359, and local tradition and archeological evidence both corroborate the main substance of the legend. Most townspeople accepted Christianity rapidly after the church had gained official recognition, while the people of the countryside remained pagan three or four hundred years longer.

At the time when Servatius ministered to the religious needs of the population, Julian, later emperor but then commander-in-chief in Gaul, fought the Frankish tribes along the Meuse. He won control of the whole valley and rebuilt the fort of Nijmegen. Peace was restored and according to Julian's panegyrists, the Franks were graciously granted imperial permission to settle between the Meuse and the Scheldt, a polite way of saying that Julian was unable to prevent Germanic expansion to the southwest.

The period of the "Great Migration" had begun, though this term is ill-suited to what took place in the Netherlands. From the confusing references to northwestern Europe found in late Roman literature, the older Netherland historians vainly sought to reconstruct the history of the period between 300 and 600 A. D. Modern scholars, relying more on archeological and philological evidence than on written sources have reconstructed those events in a way that differs widely from the assumptions of XVIIIth and XIXth century compilers. Three major events occurred in the Netherlands during the three centuries of transition from the Roman to the Carolingian period. One of these, the settling of the plains of Brabant and East Flanders, is described above. It represented a shifting of population and a spreading of settlements rather than an immigration.

In the extreme southeast, Roman authority disappeared in 400 A. D. without a last struggle, when the emperors withdrew their troops to defend Italy. There was no destruction or interruption of such meager culture as existed. Even the Christian communities survived, and on Christian graves Germanic names gradually replaced the Latin. The epitaphs bear witness to a constant deterioration of Latin. It seems that when the Roman authorities were no longer able to maintain themselves, the Franks who had settled around their forts, quickly took over the task of government. Nevertheless, a new immigration of Germanic elements must have taken place. Along the road between Tongeren and Cologne numerous villages with Germanic names are found, while in the narrower gorges opening towards the main valley, the villages still bear Celtic names.

The last and historically the most important of the three events referred to, occurred in the north of the Low Countries. The Frisians had remained undisturbed in possession of their "terp-land" until the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>3</sup> Archeologists have discovered that around that time a sudden change took place in the outward form of the civilization of the terp-

builders. The new culture, as revealed in the models of pottery and tools, is perfectly well known from northwestern Germany, where it has been found in the coastal districts of northern Hannover and Schleswig. There it ceased to exist abruptly at the same time it appeared in Friesland. The same type of culture has been found in the oldest Anglo-Saxon settlements in Britain. If we add to this archeological evidence that of philology, which proclaims close affinity between the old Frisian and Anglo-Saxon languages, and that of anthropology, which indicates an immigration into Friesland from the northeast, we can picture for ourselves the complete story. Tribes from northwestern Germany, among whom were the Angli, moved to Friesland, which they conquered. They were less numerous than the Frisians, upon whom they imposed some outward forms of civilization, and extended their authority all along the coast of Holland, subduing the people there and the remnants of the Batavi. The name Frisian, however, remained; and from that time was applied to all inhabitants of the coast north of the mouth of the Scheldt. Farther south, the conquerors occupied the small strip of territory behind the Flemish dunes. Shortly after they had occupied the Netherland coast warriors from this Anglo-Frisian-Saxon group invaded Britain and there founded the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

This was the situation in the Netherlands at the dawn of the sixth century. After that, individual immigration still took place, and small groups of refugees have continued to add new elements to the population until our own time. This has not affected the general racial composition of the people. The population of the Netherlands is of mixed origin, some descending from pre-historic settlers and the Alpine race, a few from Celtic conquerors, the majority deriving from Germanic immigrants, who were by no means all of a single racial type although they spoke kindred dialects. Little is known about the density of population in the ancient Germanic Netherlands. The total population of all countries inhabited by Germanic peoples around 400 A. D. has been estimated at about three million. If this is near the mark, there may have been a few hundred thousand in the whole of the Low Countries. In "Terp-land"—Friesland and Groningen—there are still about one hundred and eighty terp-villages and about three hundred other smaller terps. The latter usually provided room for three to five farm houses. Some of these terps were thrown up after 400 A. D., others were perhaps not permanently occupied. Taking all this into consideration, we may assume that the famous nation of the Frisians did not count more than a few tens of thousands in all. At that, "Terp-land" was rather thickly settled in comparison with the sandy plains of the eastern districts. In the western part, the population was certainly less dense, for here large areas were uninhabitable because of the increasing fury of the floods.

From such modest beginnings the Netherland nation was to grow. The population was there. Next came the establishment of a political organization for the whole of the area and the spread of Christianity that remoulded the culture of the people. Both were achieved under the Frankish kings of the Carolingian dynasty in the four hundred years that followed the fall of the Roman empire.



## CHAPTER II

### First Political Organization of the Netherlands

FEW indeed are the written records of Netherland history that date back to the fifth and sixth centuries. Gregory of Tours, the historian of the Merovingians, relates the legend of Servatius, the patron saint of Maastricht. He adds that Monulfus, then bishop of that See, built a magnificent church in honor of Servatius. Gregory apparently collected this information when passing through Metz on one of his trips to eastern France. It is characteristic that the only contemporary story we have of the sixth century Netherlands comes from their most Romanized part along the devious route usually followed by pilgrims wandering from sanctuary to sanctuary on their way to Rome. There was little or no intercourse between Frankish territory in Gaul and the pagan Germanic peoples of the Low Countries.

Chroniclers like Gregory were interested chiefly in the deeds of saints, kings, and prelates. Of these there were few representatives in the old Netherlands, except in Maastricht. There a line of bishops, respected by their flocks during their lives, were venerated as saints after death. Of the people, we hear nothing at all. Traditional historiography, based on scanty information provided by eighth and ninth century hagiography and on occasional references in the Carolingian chronicles, divides the inhabitants of the Low Countries into three groups: Franks, Saxons, and Frisians. It paints them in dark colors with all the evil instincts of murderous savages. The biographers of saints are rather unreliable, however, since they wrote for the edification of the faithful and excelled in contrast, picturing the pagans as fiends to bring out more clearly the godliness of their Christian heroes. To obtain an idea of the old Germanic Netherlands, we must turn to other sources, we must discover what remains of old customs and institutions. When we have gained a general idea of the facts, additional information may be gathered from the occasional remarks of hagiographers and chroniclers.

The fifth and sixth century Netherlanders were peasants. As in all primitive societies, man had to struggle with both nature and his fellowman. He tended to associate closely with his neighbors, or rather, he insistently maintained the ties that from time immemorial had bound him to his clan and his clan to him. The village community was the basic social unit and

the only organization at all closely knit. Tribes were little more than loose associations at village units. An uncertain number of these constituted a district, a *gouw*, the members of which elected a local chieftain. The total of the *gouws* formed the nation, but the national territory had no well-defined boundaries. In emergencies the *gouws* adopted a common leader. If this chieftain, duke or king—whatever title the chroniclers gave him, wanted the support of reliable followers, he had to recruit them from the young men who preferred adventure to hard work in the fields. The mass of the tribesmen followed their leaders to war only when they felt like it and returned home as soon as they had had enough. The village unit provided nearly all their needs and beyond it they recognized little authority.

The arable land of each village was divided among the inhabitants, while the pasture, heath, and forest around the village were common property. This entailed close cooperation by all members of the community. Regulations were made and transgressors punished. Thus a social unit existed with an administrative and a judicial organization. Later, when their regulations had become well anchored in custom, these communities were known as "mark-associations" and the agricultural unit as the "mark." The last traces of these institutions disappeared only in quite recent times. In the Netherlands the last real estate held in common was liquidated by law in 1866, while old local customs, especially in the eastern Netherlands, show the persistence of tradition. A glance at a detailed map of the province of Drente, for instance, reveals the outlines of the old settlements, surrounded by the common of heath and pasture.

These "mark associations" existed among all western Germanic peoples. Among them the same class distinctions existed between nobles, and free men, and between free men and bondsmen. A fourth class, the slaves, was unimportant socially and numerically. Nobility was hereditary. This rank carried greater influence in tribal affairs and a higher social standing and thus a better chance to acquire the lion's share of conquered land and booty. Some of the nobles were of royal rank, which meant that the military leaders, dukes or kings, might be chosen from their families. The mass of the people belonged to the class of the free men. The bondsmen, the *liten* or *laten*, were bound to the soil but were in all other respects not unlike tenants on a great landed estate. In the eighth century a slave trade existed between England and the Continent and it is assumed that prisoners of war were usually sold into slavery. The social and economic conditions prevailing in the primitive Germanic society left little place, however, for the maintenance of large bodies of slaves like those possessed by the Roman aristocrats of the second and first centuries before Christ.

It may be that the "mark association" never existed in its ideal form. In

the Netherlands, it was found in its purest form in Drente and Overijssel.<sup>4</sup> By the sixth and seventh centuries, the "mark associations" in the Netherlands had become a restricted group of farmers—landowners who predominated over non-members of the mark, such as tenant-peasants, wage earners, and craftsmen. Even in those districts where the mark institution prevailed longest and in its purest form, there was a strong class sentiment among the associates, who only grudgingly admitted new members and tried to prevent the partition of member-farms. New marks were formed as long as there was land available that could be rendered productive, but in most districts the supply ran out quickly. Thus from the beginning there existed a class of wealthy landowners, with a following of dependent free men, bondsmen and slaves. Hagiographers mention this class as the people whose conversion Christian missionaries sought as it entailed that of all their dependents.

Three other factors determined the development of the wealthier class in the old Germanic Netherlands: the geographical features of the land settled; the period in which the settlement took place; the presence of pre-invasion inhabitants. The first factor was strong in "Terp-land." Here cattle breeding, not wheat growing, was the main occupation. This branch of agriculture suited the estate owner better than crop raising. The conquest of the land by the Anglians may have fostered this tendency. Although large estates in Friesland and Groningen are often mentioned by writers of the eighth and ninth centuries, they never completely ousted the small landowners. South of the river belt, and still further south on the heaths of the Campina, which spread from the lower Scheldt to the moors of the Peel, where the Germanic settlers came relatively late and where they found an older population, large estates became the rule. Some traits of the village communities north of the rivers existed here too, but lost their significance more rapidly.

Thus agrarian institutions were basically the same in the whole of the Netherlands and, while showing regional or tribal differences, were mainly determined by geographical and historical factors. In this light, the traditional division of the old Netherlanders into the three nations of the Frisians, Saxons, and Franks loses much of its significance. In matters of religion, of which we know but little, in customs, and in social organization, there was little difference between them. The points of resemblance were always more important than the points of difference. All three followed western Germanic law. Disputes—crimes were just disputes between the criminal and his victim and family—were judged by all the free men of the *gouw* or tribe together. The content of the customary law was largely identical in the three sections of the population.

There was and still is, of course, great diversity in the dialects spoken in the various parts of the territory. Because we base our classification of modern dialect groups on historical tradition, we usually distinguish one Frisian, one Saxon and three Frankish dialect groups in modern Dutch. The transition is gradual, however, from the Frankish dialect of the southwest to the Saxon dialects of the northeast. The Frisian tongue distinguishes itself more sharply from its neighbor dialects but covers nowadays a far smaller territory than that which unquestionably belonged to Frisia in the eighth century. The modern dialect-studies neither prove nor disprove the tripartite division of the early Netherland people. It is possible that this classification came into use because of a confusion between *political* and *tribal* distinctions. There were, indeed, Franks, Frisians and Saxons in the Low Countries. Two rudimentary states were organized between the sixth and eighth centuries, one by the Franks, the other by the Frisians. The Saxons never reached that level of political organization before losing their independence. By counting all the people ruled by the kings of the Franks around 700 A. D. as Franks, and all the people ruled by the Frisian kings as Frisians, and by figuring the others as Saxons, the traditional classification was established. This method emphasized political divisions at the expense of tribal distinctions.

Around 500 A. D. King Chlodovech, or Clovis, who ruled the Franks in northwest Gaul, conquered most of the land between the Pyrenees and the Rhine. Because the Franks were mentioned in the days of Emperor Julian as being settled along the Scheldt, and because the Franks of Clovis lived not far south of that area, traditional history will have it that the Franks expanded from present Flanders and Brabant to northwest Gaul and finally over the whole of France. Clovis, however, may possibly have been the leader of a band of Roman mercenaries of Germanic origin who had no direct relations with the inhabitants of northern Belgium. Certain it is that northern Belgium and the southeastern Netherlands—the province of Limburg—were conquered by Clovis *after* he had gained supremacy in Gaul. For a long time that conquest remained superficial. There was only one district in the Low Countries where the Merovingian kings definitely established their authority, and that was the southeastern corner, the land around Tongeren and Maastricht, with its old pre-Frankish Christian community. Maastricht was at times the residence of the king. Scattered findings of Frankish objects along the rivers indicate that like the Romans, the Merovingians tried to establish a military boundary along the Rhine. Frankish government was not well organized in the Netherlands, however, until the end of the seventh century, when the Carolingians came to power.

The Anglo-Frisians of the west and north coast had also begun to organize a primitive state. This may have been a reaction against the rising power of the Franks; or it may have been instigated by the example of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, with whom the Frisians always maintained close contact. Around 700 A.D. such progress had been made that the rule of their kings extended from the northern tip of Flanders, over Holland, as far inland as the town of Utrecht, over Friesland and the coastland to the Weser, including the island of Helgoland. Frisian power was maritime and strong enough to defy the northern Saxons and Danes and even, when opportunity offered, to invade the Rhineland as far as Cologne. It owned its importance not only to the military prowess of the Frisian kings and their warriors, but also to trade and shipping. The gold coins discovered in the terp-levels of the eighth century originate from many countries and mints. The Venerable Bede was one of the first writers to report on Frisian affairs, and the close association between Frisians and Anglo-Saxons is further shown by the resemblance of their gold and silver ornaments and the similarity of the runic script used on both sides of the North Sea.

The political organization of the Anglo-Frisian kingdom was rudimentary, and the personal prestige of the king probably its most important factor. That is why the only records we have deal with the reign of King Radbod, many times victorious over the Franks. We should know more of this kingdom if the epics that glorified the martial exploits of its leaders and which were still sung by Frisian bards in the days of Charlemagne had been written down and preserved. Nearly all our present knowledge is derived from hostile Frankish sources. In half a century of incessant wars, between 720 and 776, the Carolingians broke the Frisian power and destroyed its independence.

How far did the establishment of political states modify the social organization of the people? The Carolingian conquest first gave significance to monarchical institutions in the Netherlands. Hitherto "kings" had been local leaders. The Carolingian monarchy was the first to control the whole of the Low Countries. Theoretically, relations between ruler and ruled remained for a while what they had been, but in practice the whole situation was changed. Charlemagne's military and civil administration directly affected the character of local government and the judiciary. Besides, the Carolingian monarchy introduced a new factor into the old social structure by the adoption of Christianity and the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church. Christianity was imposed under the direct guidance of the kings, so much so that we may call the Church a part of the new administration.

The Church of Merovingian Gaul never had had much expansive force.

Deteriorating rapidly because of the meddling of barbaric, yet despotic kings with ecclesiastical affairs, it needed a spiritual rejuvenation. A religious revival was begun by Irish monks who came to Gaul to set an example of true monastic life. They commanded the respect of the kings and eventually inspired the Frankish clergy to take its duties more to heart. Saint Amand, the great missionary of Flanders was their disciple. Thanks to him the conversion of the southern Low Countries preceded that of the northern part by three-quarters of a century. But the only Christian church in the Netherlands, that of Tongeren-Maastricht, had fallen so low that Saint Amand, sent to reorganize it, left the diocese in despair within three years.

Whereas in the southern Low Countries religious work had been carried on by itinerant Irish priests or by Frankish bishops inspired by the Irish example, the conversion of the northern Low Countries was the work of Anglo-Saxon missionaries. The close affinity of the Frisian and Anglo-Saxon languages made this task easier for Englishmen than for Franks. Commercial relations between the two peoples provided easy access to the country and assured the missionaries of a friendly reception. Even so, the efforts of the Anglo-Saxon priests remained fruitless until Frankish power secured them a willing audience among a subdued people. The story of Saint Willibrord, the "apostle of the Frisians," bears this out. Upon his arrival in Friesland in 690 Willibrord crossed the country from one end to the other, vainly preaching the Gospel to King Radbod as well as to the common people. On a second trip he traveled as far as Helgoland, then a Frisian sanctuary, where to the dismay of the pagan inhabitants, he desecrated their holy places and killed some of their sacred cattle. Apparently the people were tolerant and even his actions on Helgoland failed to provoke the violent reprisals he probably expected and for which he perhaps hoped. Discouraged, he withdrew to the territory south of the great rivers where, with the support of Pepin (the second major domus of that name), he devoted himself to converting the people of northern Brabant and to preparing for a future mission.

Willibrord saw that he would have to win over the leading classes of the people he sought to convert. His chance came when the rudimentary Frisian state was shattered by the Frankish monarchy. The Frankish and anti-Frankish factions among the Frisians, necessarily became identified with Christianity and paganism. We find evidence of the same party strife in the story of the martyrdom of Saint Boniface. When attacked by an armed band of Frisian pagans, he refused to allow his Christian followers to defend him, preferring to suffer death. Later, when the report of his death spread through the country, the Christians gathered a strong force, over-

whelmed the murderers and carried off their women, children and servants—a rather unchristian act in which the hagiographer apparently saw just punishment for the ruthless murder of a defenseless missionary. It clearly suggests a conflict between two factions of the nobility.

This close relation between political and religious penetration of the Frisian and Saxon districts led to the rapid if superficial adoption of Christianity. The oldest Frisian law code, promulgated in the time of Charlemagne, provides a penalty for the desecration of the sabbath but permits the killing of a new born baby by the mother, an old pagan custom. In supplements to the code, we even find penalties for the violation of pagan holy places. More than two centuries were needed to complete the conversion of the Netherlands which, after 800, were outwardly part of the Roman Catholic Church. As late as 896, the bishop of Utrecht received donations to “make it possible for him to instruct and support converts from paganism.” Successful as the close cooperation between secular and ecclesiastical authorities proved, it was pregnant with grave danger for the Church. Willing to support the Church, the Carolingians were still more determined to dominate it. The whole Church of Gaul was in process of being absorbed by the state—not only its estates, but even its offices, bishoprics and abbeys. The bishops, being Frankish noblemen, were unavoidably drawn into the political quarrels of the aristocracy. Lambert, last bishop of Maastricht, a contemporary and friend of Willibrord, was first driven from his bishopric and then murdered by his political opponents. Bishops were obliged to be lavish with the property entrusted to them for religious purposes.

As an Anglo-Saxon, Willibrord was not involved in the feuds of the Frankish aristocracy and could accept the support of the Carolingians without fear for his Church. To maintain the integrity of his clergy and to revive religious fervor among his missionaries, he founded the monastery of Echternach, in present day Luxemburg. The center of his missionary activity was Utrecht, then a small Frankish fortress donated by Charles Martel to the See of Frisia, founded in 695 for Willibrord by Pope Sergius in Rome.<sup>5</sup> After his death in 739, the episcopal see remained vacant for fourteen years until another Anglo-Saxon, Saint Boniface, the apostle of central Germany, took up the task where Willibrord had left it.

After the death of Boniface, the diocese of Utrecht was established, no longer as an independent Frisian archbishopric but as a bishopric subordinate to the archdiocese of Cologne. In due time its boundaries were determined. To the south, they were the rivers Waal and Meuse. The bishopric included, however, the delta islands of the Scheldt, the present province of Zeeland. Its eastern limits coincided with the existing Netherland-German boundary over about one-third of its extent, a fact of the greatest interest.

Here in this ecclesiastical delimitation we have a foreshadowing of the later political division between the Netherlands and Germany, that cut straight through the originally homogeneous Low-Germanic country. East of Utrecht, the See of Muenster was founded at Charlemagne's behest by the Frisian missionary Liudger. The emperor called him away from his missionary work in the eastern Terp-land and on the banks of the IJssel, to organize the newly established Church in the half-conquered Saxon land. At that time the eastern Terp-land, the lowlands of the present province of Groningen, and the parishes founded by Liudger east of the IJssel, became part of the diocese of Muenster, while all the rest of the Netherlands north of the Waal, formed the diocese of Utrecht. Nijmegen, south of the Waal, belonged to the archdiocese of Cologne, a connection which may indicate that all through post-Roman times not only a trading village but also a small Christian community continued to exist in the old town of the Batavi. South of the rivers virtually all territory now belonging to the Netherlands was incorporated in the diocese of Liège, which succeeded that of Maastricht.

To the Anglo-Saxons the Netherlands owe if not their first schools at least their oldest center of learning. Willibrord had founded a school at Utrecht which was carried on after his death by monks of the Utrecht monastery. Boniface fostered the same ideals. Wherever he went he carried cases of books. His biographer, when relating the murder of the saint by the pagan Frisians in 754, laments the wanton destruction of the books hardly less than the death of their owner. The school of Utrecht provided the first Netherland writer, Liudger the Frisian, later first bishop of Westphalia, who around 800 wrote a biography of Gregory, abbot of the Utrecht monastery. The second Dutch writer, the biographer of Boniface, was also connected with the Utrecht school.

From the Anglo-Saxon missionaries the Frisians and Saxons acquired a fervor for distant pilgrimages. They had already formed a colony in Rome, near the Church of Saint Peter, at the beginning of the IXth century. In 846, when Rome was threatened by Mohammedan pirates, the Romans granted to these Frisians, Franks, and Saxons the painful honor of sallying forth to Ostia to meet the enemies of the faith, a task of which they acquitted themselves with valor but without success.

This brief review of the early Catholic Church in the Netherlands shows that the introduction of Christianity affected not only the religious but also the social institutions of the people. No less important were the changes caused by the political administration of the Carolingians. The latter were powerful enough to establish their authority upon a new basis, making services compulsory that hitherto had been occasional and volun-



tary. Duties were now imposed upon the people where previously consent and cooperation had been asked. Taxes and tithes were levied, military service had to be rendered regularly and without default. To enforce his demands, the king appointed a count as his representative in each given district. Although the count presided over the courts, the people continued to decide civil and criminal disputes according to their old customs and could not be obliged to apply the royal laws. Regal authority however found other ways of interfering with popular jurisdiction.

One of the simplest was to grant so called "immunity" to ecclesiastical institutions, to monasteries, to the clergy in general and to subjects of the Church. In the days of the Carolingians, the "immunities" were still of minor scope and importance, but they grew with the progress of Christianity and the increase of church property. Another class of people made independent of the old social organization were the personal followers of the king, his "vassals" entitled to special protection. Where he so desired, there were various ways in which the king could bring matters before his own "court," the gathering of the noblemen who followed him. Even in this case it was not the king himself, but the peers of the accused who rendered justice. The natural shortcoming of popular jurisdiction provided the monarchy with good grounds for interference with the custom. The nobles and free men gathered in the "ding" usually appointed some of their own number who were experts in customary law to formulate and pronounce their judgments. The kings encouraged this tendency to transfer the essential part of the judicial function to experts. Thus benches of *scabini*, or jurors were formed and with the support of the counts rapidly superseded the popular courts in most criminal cases. In the southern Low Countries these benches had wholly replaced the older institutions before the end of the Carolingian period. In the northern section ancient custom proved far more tenacious; and here when eventually the rendering of justice was entrusted to experts, they were elected by the people.

New classes were created within the early Netherland society, but for the masses old institutions remained predominant. The authority of the counts was restricted and most officials were chosen from among the leading classes of the nation itself, only rarely being foreigners. Charlemagne took care to have the local law of custom written down and had it not been for the destruction wrought by the Vikings, we might still have the national epics of the Low-Germanic peoples that were recorded by order of the Emperor. These measures show clearly enough that any fanatical leveling of the hills and filling up the valleys of cultural life was foreign to the greatest of the Carolingians.

Far more effective than direct interference with the customs of the people

were the indirect consequences to the agrarian communities in the purely Germanic territory of a new principle introduced in the ownership of the soil. From Merovingian times the Frankish kings had claimed the right to all wild lands in their kingdom and also to all fishing that was not private property. There was no cadastre of landed property, however, and there were no maps. The king rarely used his right over uncultivated soil except to make grants of land to his followers. The usual procedure, especially in a distant corner of the kingdom like the Netherlands, was for the aspirant to call the attention of the monarch to the existence of certain forests or heaths and then to receive the ownership or the usufruct thereof. The result was that wild land was appropriated first in those districts where the power of the kings was strong. In other places and where perhaps the wild lands were of less value the appropriation was postponed for a century or more. When royal authority weakened the right of appropriation was assumed by local counts who had become virtually independent. The exercise of this royal prerogative greatly increased the number and size of the large estates. It deprived the peasantry of the reserves of land on which an eventual excess of population might have settled—not that these lands were definitely closed to colonists, but in settling there, they had to accept the conditions of the owner which in practice meant becoming his bondsmen.

There was a close connection between the development of political administration in the Carolingian period and the rapid expansion of the large estates. To organize an administration, the monarchs needed officials; and to pay these officials, they distributed portions of the royal domain. To avoid the complete draining of the royal exchequer, they made use of their right to all public lands. In the long run it made little difference whether the estates of officials were held by them in fief or given to them outright. How did this system, common to the whole of northwestern Europe, affect the Netherlands, placed between the Latinized countries of the southwest and the Germanic countries of the northeast and with close ties with the Anglo-Saxon world over the sea?

At the close of the period of Netherland history dealt with in this chapter, that is, around 825, the country showed considerable homogeneity of culture and population. Its social institutions were slowly evolving towards feudalism, with its sharp class distinctions. The wealthier class of landowners was increasing in power and entrenching itself in an unassailable position above the masses. In this it was strongly supported by the monarchy. The Church too was broadening its power but in doing so was rapidly becoming part of the political machinery. In the Netherlands these tendencies were counteracted by the numerical and economic importance

of the surviving class of free farmers. Slavery had virtually disappeared by the end of the Carolingian period. The number of bondsmen was rapidly increasing, and their social security grew with the legalization of their status. All along the coast, in the marshlands of Holland and Friesland which had little attraction for the aristocracy, a free peasantry maintained itself. Here where fishing and trading offered additional sources of income, the people were naturally less dependent on agriculture and less subject to feudalization. The consequences of this will become apparent in the following chapter.

A foreshadowing of the future prosperity of the Netherlands might be seen in the flourishing trade carried on in Carolingian days, from the port of Dorestad, now Wijk-bij-Duurstede. It is true that this "emporium" has lost much of the fame it owed to Carolingian chroniclers and their copyists, as a result of modern excavations. These have revealed a village of skippers and small traders, the houses spreading in three successive rows along a single street, the whole protected by a primitive fortress of earth and wooden palisades. Though primitive, it was the first of the Netherland trading cities and in its time enjoyed a reputation for wealth that won for it the unwelcome attentions of the Vikings.

The Vikings began their incursions during the reign of Charlemagne. To penetrate into the Netherlands, they needed only to follow the sea, the onslaughts of which were more violent than ever and made deep inroads into the land. During the five centuries prior to 800, the west winds had pressed the Netherland dunes back as much as three miles. Buildings inside the dunes constructed in earlier days and obliterated by the retreating masses of sand, reappeared outside the dunes only to be submerged by the sea. The openings in the "Westwall" widened; the lower-lying peat-grounds, slowly built up by nature through hundreds of years, were rapidly dissolved and destroyed. In the north, the openings widened so far that the wall of dunes was cut in pieces and the remaining sections reduced to small islands in the expanse of sea and shoal. Farther to the south, the inland lakes widened and began to form the "Zuiderzee" which was then turned into a salt water basin. It took another six hundred years for the Zuiderzee to gain the dimension it had before the gigantic reclamation of our day was undertaken.

Thus three factors mainly determined the further development of social and political institutions in the Netherlands. The first was political, especially the invasions of the Vikings and the partitions of the Frankish monarchy. In a coastal country like the Netherlands, these events were of special interest. The second was the peculiar character of the soil, which

attacked by the sea had to be reclaimed and protected from further inroads. The third was the geographical position of the Netherlands which, with the spreading of Christian civilization and the progress of political organization in northern Europe, became more central.

## CHAPTER III

### The Origin of the Provinces

FOR nearly sixty years the Netherlands were merely a part of the undivided Frankish monarchy. In 843 the unity of that monarchy was broken, never to be restored. It fell apart into its cultural components: Romanic-Gallic, Germanic, and Ultramontane. In course of time these grew into the states of France, Germany, and Italy. As a borderland between the Romanic and the Germanic sections, the Low Countries unavoidably became an object of rivalry between the kings of the West and the East. By the Treaty of Verdun in 843 all territory between the Scheldt and the Rhine including Frisia, with Utrecht and other districts along the Rhine and IJssel, were given to Middle Francia, the ephemeral realm of Lothar I. With the second partition in 870 at Meerssen, this middle kingdom was divided between its neighbors of the East and West. The new boundary ran from north to south straight through the Netherlands, cutting the territory into two nearly equal parts. This arrangement lasted only ten years. Then, after a series of conflicts during which the local leaders repeatedly changed their allegiance, the whole of the middle kingdom was annexed to the kingdom of the East. From 925, the boundary between Germany and France followed the Scheldt, separating the territory of Flanders politically from the rest of the southern Low Countries.

The history of these partitions is of little interest. Who ever of the Carolingians ruled in the Low Countries quickly discovered that his authority rested solely upon his military prowess; not that the vassals had to be compelled to obedience, but because the king alone could afford protection against the Vikings. None of the Carolingian princes was able to provide that protection. On the contrary, some of them even granted parts of the territory to Norman chiefs, to set one pirate against another. This was not effective and the royal authority remained of slight importance. The inhabitants, abandoned by their sovereign, suffered terribly. Dorestad was bled to death by the pirates. Utrecht was destroyed, and its bishop driven from his diocese. Of all Carolingian and pre-Carolingian monuments in the Netherlands, only one, a small church in southern Limburg, survived the general destruction.

Left by their kings to their own devices, the once war-like Frisians and

Franks were singularly unable to defend themselves. The progress of civilization was interrupted, but so was the development of feudal institutions in the Netherland coastlands. In this respect the Norman period may have been of great consequence, but we lack the evidence to determine its exact significance.

As the partitions did not coincide with ecclesiastical or linguistic boundaries, they were of no political or cultural consequence. In the eastern boundary of the Middle Empire, one may recognize the present German-Dutch boundary; but soon we find that it is only because it followed the contour of the diocese of Utrecht. The latter alone has historical significance. The western boundary continued to exist for many centuries, but was without historical consequence, hardly perceptible to the mass of the people. The boundary was not as today a sharp dividing line between two linguistic areas or two distinct economic and political systems. It denoted a difference in the allegiance of the fiefholders—nothing more—and this was of no great importance. Many medieval Netherland nobles held fiefs from both the German and the French kings, and owed allegiance to both. They and the masses of the people were far less aware of the separate political existence of the French and German kingdoms, than of the unity that bound together all the princes, potentates, towns, and peoples of western Christendom. If the kings of France and Germany had early succeeded in establishing a strong central government, this conception might have been modified, but history shaped it so that the kings of France did not score any success in this direction until after the kings of Germany had definitely failed. Thus, in the early Middle Ages, the Low Countries were never subjected to strong political pressure from both sides at the same time.

It did not much matter to which kingdom the Netherland potentates owed allegiance. Whether they paid homage to Charles the Bald or Charles the Fat, to any of the Louis or Lothars, they learned to act for themselves. They regarded their native lands as hereditary possessions, and took to themselves much of the royal prerogative. Within two centuries, the Low Countries, north of the riverbelt, fell apart into five feudal states: the counties of Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Guelders, and the episcopal state of Utrecht, composed of two territorial units: the "Nedersticht" and the "Oversticht." South of the rivers, Brabant became the principal feudal state, flanked to the west by Flanders, theoretically part of France, and to the east by the principalities of Liège, Limburg, and Valkenburg.

The kings of Germany, who were the first to seek a strengthening of royal authority after the downfall of the Carolingian empire, came close to attaining their goal. Otto I, Henry II, Conrad II, and Henry III, all

attempted to create some order in the political chaos of the Low Countries. To keep down turbulent local rulers, they strengthened the power of loyal supporters of their regime, the dukes of Lorraine in the south and the bishops of Utrecht in the north. Had this plan succeeded, the bishops of Utrecht would have become secular as well as ecclesiastical lords within their diocese. It is idle to speculate what course Netherland history might have taken if at this early date, the major part of territory had been organized into one feudal ecclesiastical state. The attempt failed mainly because of the stubborn resistance of the "Frisians" of the coastal districts. From this conflict between monarchical power, represented by the bishops of Utrecht, and the stubborn coastal people, were born the western and northern "provinces" of the Netherlands.

The details of this struggle, which lasted from the middle of the Xth to the end of the XIth century, are of little interest. Our knowledge is of the slightest. Suffice to say that in the western coastal districts a dynasty of petty potentates, possibly deriving their origin from one of the Norman pirate chiefs, succeeded in creating a miniature feudal state including the area around Leiden and the domains of the old monastery of Egmond. These "water-counts," petty lords of the dunes and marshes, gradually extended their rule over the thinly inhabited and desolate swamps between the dunes and the lower Meuse. The marshes were their chief protection against the punitive expeditions of the German kings and their faithful followers, the bishop of Utrecht and the duke of Lorraine.

Even so, they might have succumbed in the unequal struggle, had it not been for the assistance of the count of Flanders. The inhabitants of the western marshland were still called "Frisians" by contemporary chroniclers. The Flemish count who saved their primitive feudal state from untimely destruction is accordingly remembered in history as Robert the Frisian. His interest in the northern neighborland was primarily dynastic, but the close association of the various western districts of the Low Countries under a prince who was more deeply involved in the political problems of England and France than in those of Germany is suggestive of later events.

The newly formed coastal principality had no name. Chronicles of its fierce struggle for survival, refer to its rulers as the "Frisian counts," or the "marquesses" of Vlaardingen. Vlaardingen was then a small fishing and trading village near the mouth of the Meuse, where the Imperial troops had suffered one of their worst defeats. When the counts, having firmly established their authority over the marshy country, were accepted as members of the princely aristocracy of the Holy Roman Empire, we find them called "counts of Holland." The origin of the name Holland, first used in 1054, is uncertain. In the Middle Ages Holland was believed to be derived

from Holt-land, which means woodland; modern authorities think it came from "Hol," a marsh, and meant "marshy land." <sup>6</sup>

Count Robert of Flanders had helped to save Holland, and naturally his own country gained by the adventure. The Flemish counts had already extended their authority over several districts north and east of the boundaries of the Empire. From the XIth century, we find them in possession of the islands formed by the branches of the Scheldt. Soon the whole island group, then more extensive than now, became known as the county of Zeeland. As long as feudal rulers existed in the Netherlands, it was united politically first with Flanders and from the end of the XIth century with Holland, as a fief of Flanders.

Official recognition of the "water-counts" was due to the fact that in the great struggle within the Empire at the end of the XIth century, they had sided with the victors. Popes and emperors had become involved in a conflict over the lay investiture of ecclesiastics. Discontented groups among the German feudal aristocracy rallied around the pope. One center of opposition was the duchy of Saxony, and it is significant that the counts of Holland maintained close relations with the Saxon nobility. The bishops of Utrecht, on the other hand, were the natural defenders of the Imperial power which had made them secular rulers. Naturally, the Netherland episcopal state shared the fate of its Imperial masters and emerged from the struggle with great loss of prestige and domain.

To the inaccessibility of their marshland and to the political troubles of the Empire, the counts of Holland owed the strengthening of their position. The same causes produced the most remarkable phenomenon of Dutch medieval history—the free or rather anarchical republican institutions in the northern Netherlands, in Friesland and the lowlands of Groningen. After the withdrawal of the Vikings, the old Terp-land had been left to its fate. The German kings occasionally invested one or other of their vassals as count of Friesland, but to bear the title and to rule the country were two different things. The fief was so often bestowed or confiscated that we may assume the fiefholders rarely exerted their authority. Certainly the stubborn and self-willed Frisians felt no obligation towards them. They followed their own way of life, settling their own affairs, caring not at all what German potentate bore the title of count of Friesland. The problem became acute around 1130, when the counts of Holland obtained the investiture, but even then there was no change in the larger part of the territory. Such central administration as had ever functioned in Friesland ceased to exist by the end of the XIth century. In the XIIIth century political anarchy had become so much a national institution that Frisian writers boasted of it. They sought legal confirmation of their



existing freedom; and as this could not be obtained from the ruling kings and princes, they found it in tradition which they subsequently claimed as of right. From this to the assertion that the ancient Frisian freedom had been guaranteed by Charlemagne, and from that to the "restoration" of "lost" charters of freedom, was only a few steps.

Gradually, the extent of free Frisian territory shrank in the Middle Ages. Holland, known prior to 1100 only as part of Frisia, had become a separate feudal state. The rise of the Saxon principalities in Germany reduced Frisian territory in the east. For a century or so longer, Frisia extended from Alkmaar in north Holland to west of Bremen.

In the XIIIth century, the Frisian territory was divided by the ever-growing incursions of the sea. Until that time the central part of the Zuiderzee had existed as an inland lake. Then under pressure of northwestern storms, the waters broke up the solid wall of dunes and formed the Frisian islands. The channels and river outlets from the former inland lake to the North Sea widened until they formed one vast inlet of the ocean. Thus the western Friesland was separated from the main body. Cornered between the forces of the counts of Holland and the sea, these West Frisians, after a fierce struggle, were forced in the late XIIIth century, to capitulate and accept the counts as their territorial lords. From that time the Zuiderzee formed the western boundary of Friesland.

The territory was still further reduced as the lowlands of Groningen gradually fell under the influence of the city of that name. Here, in the XVth century, even the Frisian tongue was replaced by a Saxon dialect. By the end of the Middle Ages Frisia, the far flung sea-land of the Frisians, was reduced to the limits of the present province of Friesland.

Thus the territories of Zeeland, Holland, Friesland, and Groningen took form along the sea coast. As we have seen their political development was shaped by continuous resistance to the encroachments of German monarchical power. It was a revolt of the borderlands against the central government, and represents in a way the beginning of an independent Netherlands. Of course, the XIth and XIIth century counts of Holland did not undertake this struggle as a "fight for freedom" or to secede from the Holy Roman Empire. They resisted the central authority of that Empire, in the persons of the bishops of Utrecht, just as other feudal princes sought to make their domains hereditary and to secure their rights against monarchical authority. However, the geographical position of the Netherlands coastland and their close association with Flanders and across the North Sea strengthened the independence of the county of Holland and its western ties, thus loosening its bonds to the east.

The bishops of Utrecht succeeded no better in organizing political unity

in the eastern than in the western half of the Netherlands. From the oldest Germanic times, the plains of the east had been divided into *gouws*. These districts organized as counties during the reign of Charlemagne, tended to become petty feudal states in the confusion of the IXth and Xth centuries. The elimination of the more unruly of these self-created principalities was no easy task. Ancient chroniclers tell in vivid terms of many acts of violence and cruelty committed by the ruthless rebels. After their destruction the monarchy gave the conquered land to other and more trustworthy vassals. Most of the land expropriated north of the Rhine was given to the bishops of Utrecht, while between the Meuse and the Rhine a secular principality arose under the Wassenbergs.

From this dynasty sprang several ruling families between the Rhine and the Meuse. In the extreme south were the counts of Valkenburg, whose tiny territory extended east of Maastricht on that stretch of loess soil already referred to. To the north the counts of Guelders, now Geldern in the Rhine province, controlled both banks of the Meuse from Roermond to Venlo. Still farther north, the counts of Cleve were firmly established astride the lower Rhine, west of Wesel. Thus the descendants of this one family controlled all the routes connecting western Germany with the North Sea ports, the land route along the old Roman highway from Cologne to Maastricht and Tongeren, as well as the rivers Meuse and Rhine.

Their power was apparently more firmly established than that of the bishops north of the river. In the crucial years of the early XIIIth century, when the political position of the bishopric was buffeted by the Investiture storm, the episcopal dignity was for a while held by a member of the Wassenberg-Guelders family. When the northern ecclesiastical state collapsed shortly afterwards, the counts of Guelders were the chief gainers. The bishops' authority over the lands in the riverbelt had been uncertain. Their power over faraway Drente, the ancient Hunebed country, depended upon the loyalty of vassals they had installed in their castle of Coevorden to control the gap in the peat moors that formed the entrance to Drente's sandy plains. Their position east of the IJssel river seemed more secure, but without royal authority to support them, the bishops could not prevent their secular rivals from encroaching upon their territory. The counts of Guelders soon succeeded in obtaining possession of various pieces of territory and several independent lordships which they organized into a new state, now the province of Guelderland. A purely artificial political structure, it was admirably located in control of the Rhine just where it branches into its delta. The episcopal state was divided in two. One area immediately surrounding Utrecht, became the province of that name. The other beyond the IJssel, was known as the "Oversticht" and encompassed the modern

provinces of Drente and Overijssel with the town, but not the lowlands, of Groningen.

Thus, the provinces of the Netherlands, which were to gain world-wide renown in the XVIIth century, came into existence. Originally, there were numerous small lordships enclosed in the larger territorial units. Some were gradually absorbed by their more powerful neighbors, others survived until the French revolution swept them away. At the end of the XIth century the area south of the riverbelt, between the Scheldt in the west and the moors of the Peel on the east, formed part of the duchy of Brabant, but was separated from that state in the XVIIth century, and at the end of the XVIIIth became the province of Noord Brabant. There is no need to describe in detail the dynastic history of the Netherland principalities nor to follow their territorial and political vicissitudes. John Lothrop Motley rightly says: "Even the most devout of genealogists might shudder to chronicle the long succession of so many illustrious obscure." Only the development of the social institutions of the people inhabiting these multifarious states is of interest.

As we have seen, the feudal system had been introduced in the Carolingian period. It did not permeate the whole social structure as in other countries, for geographical conditions hindered its growth. The rapid increase of the population during the Xth and XIth centuries caused an expansion of the area under cultivation. In many parts of the country ancient popular institutions were still strong enough to prevent the benefits of this expansion to accrue to a single class of the population. By the XIth century, the ancient Germanic nobility had virtually disappeared by the killing off of families in clan-strife, the splitting up of estates, the resulting impoverishment of the various branches and other factors. Few of the noble houses of the later Middle Ages could boast of descent from pre-Carolingian or even Carolingian aristocracy. A new nobility deriving its title from the service of territorial lords, took the place of the families of ancient lineages. These were the "ministeriales," the men at arms, retainers and esquires of the provincial counts, their professional soldiery. Besides these, a number of "mayors" of princely manors also rose to the rank of nobility. From this class the gentry of the later Middle Ages sprang in the whole of western Europe.

Where the power and wealth of the territorial lords was small or non-existent, no class of "ministeriales" could arise. In Friesland, where all central authority disappeared after the XIth century, the old clans of hereditary nobles became extinct. Slavery had disappeared after the Carolingian period. Two hundred years later "bondage," also was virtually a thing of the past in the coastlands. Custom continued to distinguish between bonds-

men and freemen, but the only real difference between them was that bondsmen were subject to certain personal taxes from which freemen were exempt. In Friesland bondage vanished completely. In Holland the only lords who had power over bondsmen were the count himself and the abbot of Egmond. In Zeeland, there were only two classes: nobles and commoners. In these countries the term "nobleman" simply meant "fiefholder" or "vassal" of the prince, quite regardless of the origin of the family.

This early abolition of bondage, a development widely different from that pictured in our traditional historiography, was caused among other reasons by internal colonization whereby the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Utrecht made land and homes for their rapidly increasing population. From the XIth to the XIIIth centuries the coastal Frisians toiled to convert the marshes behind the dunes into arable land.

We do not know with certainty in what century the first dykes were constructed. The Romans had built them as substructures for their highways along the lower branches of the Rhine, but the protection of the low land was a secondary, even incidental, aspect of their work. We know that the technique of dyke building was well advanced in the XIth century, but we can only guess at the date of its origin. The VIIIth century has been mentioned in this connection, though the IXth has perhaps better claims. In Zeeland, where the protective dunes had been broken into small fragments at an early date, and where the impact of the southwestern storms combined with the effects of the Gulfstream to cause abnormal tides—at some places the normal rise is fifteen feet—all ramparts were broken during the VIIIth and IXth centuries. The wide marshland through which the Scheldt had formerly broken its course to the sea was reduced to a number of scattered and precarious islands. While in Holland regulation of the rivers was the first necessity, Zeeland had to build heavy sea-dykes to protect the few relatively safe spots on the islands. Once this was done, its people slowly began to reclaim the lost ground, throwing up new dykes around shoals and shallow water immediately in front of the old ramparts. An initial mistake was made of pulling down the old dyke as soon as a new outer bulwark was built. The results were disastrous as the lower strata of the soil in the shallow inlets of the sea kept moving, and suddenly for no apparent reason, part of the dyke would melt into the sea, leaving a wide gap through which the waters poured to reoccupy the ground they had lost. Thus the aspect of the Zeeland islands was constantly changing. Some of the existing islands were literally built by the age-long efforts of the people; in other places, the sea not only regained its own, but even destroyed old settlements.

The islands of Flakkee and Tholen, for instance, were constructed in the late Middle Ages by the relentless efforts of the people. The island of Walcheren was patched together from a number of smaller islands. That of South Beveland literally moved westward, for while large tracts of land were being reclaimed west of the oldest dykes, the sea broke off equally large sections on the east. The island of North Beveland, one of the oldest of all, even disappeared only to emerge again from the sea sixty-six years later.

The problems of Holland were different. Here the dunes had remained unbroken and the country was fairly well protected from the sea. The danger of flood sprang from the extremely low and constantly sinking level of the soil, which was in danger of submersion at every excessive rainfall and at every spring thaw. The Rhine, dividing into many branches, never formed a deep river bed, and this increased the danger of floods. Once the principal rivers were banked with strong dykes—the bishops of Utrecht deserve credit for the part they took in this work—the inland area was relatively safe. It was still exposed, however, to the dangers arising from excessive rainfall and the low fall of the rivers. After the main dykes along the rivers and the Zuiderzee had been built, the lowland of Holland and Utrecht formed a broad hollow plain surrounded by dunes and dykes, but whenever the outflow of the smaller rivers was interfered with, the situation became critical. Obviously, the next step was to close these natural river outlets and to replace them by sluices to prevent high tides outside the dykes from affecting the level of the inland waters. The construction of dams and sluices began in the XIIth century and was completed a hundred years later. These dams naturally hindered shipping but the small size of the river boats made it possible to haul them over the dams. That called for more hands than the boats carried, and resulted in small settlements of skippers, traders, and craftsmen, which later developed into towns. Hence the names of so many cities in Holland ending with—dam, like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Zaandam, and many others. Right in the center of Amsterdam, the old dam through the river Amstel still exists.

The third step in the development of the soil, the systematic drainage of the land by ditching, by collecting the water in canals immediately behind the dykes, and by pumping the surplus into the sea was not undertaken until the end of the Middle Ages. We hear of the first windmills in 1408, when one was built near Alkmaar, and officials of the “polders” of southern Holland traveled north to study the new technical marvel. Until that time the “polders,” dyked-in tracts of land where the water is kept at low level by artificial means, depended for drainage upon a clever use of the

tidal difference in the outside waters, but this course provided no security. By the end of the XVIth century, the whole of Holland and the island area was divided into polders.

In Friesland the situation was different, for here, once the main dykes were built, the sea itself contributed to the reconstruction of the land. The tides deposited enormous masses of silt in the inlets of the sea and along the shore. The main task of the people was to wait for the moment when the filling in of the shallow areas had progressed far enough to justify the building of new outer dykes. The "Middelzee," an inlet nearly twenty miles in depth had already been turned into fertile fields by the end of the XIIIth century, and a century later the sea was pushed back another five or six miles.

The work of converting the old marshlands into arable fields made such progress between the XIth and XIIIth centuries that at the end of that period the area under cultivation—if we except Zeeland and a number of inland lakes in Holland which were drained off later—was not much smaller than at the beginning of the XIXth century.

This enormous task of internal colonization called for the full use of all available man power. There was a constant demand for any surplus labor that existed in the older cultivated areas. This created a freedom of movement which forcibly loosened the stricter social and economic ties holding the various classes of society each in its appointed sphere. In this sense the slogan, "Only free men can undertake such a monumental task," is true. Social and political freedom was not an essential postulate of the great work undertaken in Holland's marshlands, but it was certainly the inevitable outcome. The fact that the feudal system had never really taken root in the coastlands made the development even more natural.

Although the geographical and political development of Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland are fairly easy to follow, we know less about economic conditions during these centuries of internal expansion. However, the struggle against the floods and marshes aroused such boundless energy in the people that soon the reclamation in the Low Countries was too little for them, and a number of emigrants set out for distant and less populated regions where new tasks awaited them. From the end of the Xth century Low-German potentates, the bishops of Bremen, the marquesses of Brandenburg, the dukes of Saxonia, the counts of Holstein and Luebeck sought the assistance of the coastal Dutch in the reclamation of wild lands conquered from the Slavs, especially of those regions where the conditions were similar to those in Holland and Flanders. The first to contract with an enterprising Hollander for such work was Bishop Frederick of Bremen. Some of the colonists acted as contractors, undertaking to build a definite

number of farms on a certain tract of land, and themselves enrolled volunteers willing to migrate to the East. The new settlers always became wholly free farmers, subject to tithes and certain taxes, but without any bond of personal servitude or obligation. This colonization of northeastern Germany continued for more than a century, and the importance of the Dutch-Flemish element in the composition of its German population is attested by the survival for centuries of Dutch-Flemish customary law in that region.

German chroniclers specifically mentioned among the pioneers of what was then the "Far East," "large groups of Flemings, Hollanders, and people from the diocese of Utrecht." The traditional explanation of this exodus is that frequent floods "drove the poor unfortunate peasants of Holland from their native country." Strange indeed for at that very time the people of Holland were feverishly expanding their fields, constructing dykes, building churches in the new villages and primitive towns that sprang up all over the country. On several occasions the coastlands were severely damaged by violent floods, but in spite of these the country and the people became more and more prosperous. It is probable that only excess population that could not find land and work even in the growing Dutch community emigrated. Probably the natural effects of national prosperity and activity, the greater number of marriages, more and better food for everybody, led to an increasing population and lower mortality. The population of the coastlands must have risen by leaps and bounds, even faster than the arable soil could be expanded.

From the foregoing, it is clear that medieval Holland and Friesland do not fit the traditional framework most historical textbooks provide. Serfdom did not exist, and by the XIIth and XIIIth centuries, only the faintest traces of bondage remained. The influence of the people in the administration of justice and in many matters of government persisted despite all political vicissitudes. In Friesland, where no central administration functioned after the XIth century, the villages and small districts became independent political and social units. With the extinction of the old Frisian nobility, the greatest influence in political and judicial matters fell to the principal landowners, regardless of the origin of their families. The country, so to speak, fell apart into thirty small territorial units, the *grietenijen*, each ruled by a *grietman* who was responsible for order and acted as public prosecutor, head of what administration existed—and who represented the *grietenij* at the meetings of his *gouw*. The office of *grietman* was always filled by one of the principal landowners of the district, and a member of the same class held the post of *asega* or judicial expert. In each case the office-holder had to be confirmed at a meeting to which all householders were summoned in order to accept or reject the nominees. This was true

of ecclesiastical as well as secular offices, for in most Frisian parishes even the parish priest was elected by the householders of the community.

In this curiously democratic rural society, the springing up of small towns and the founding of large monasteries threatened to disrupt the established "order." The problem was met by the fiction that a town was another *grietenij*, though with a rather dense population. The town administration originally organized like that of a rural district, later followed the example set by towns of Overijssel and Holland. There was no such legal distinction between town and countryside as existed elsewhere in medieval Europe. Here the towns did not receive a privileged status from the lord of the land, but the townspeople governed themselves as their free ancestors had done.

The monastic orders of Citeaux and Prémontré became important in Friesland because of the share the monks took in reclaiming the land. As the owners of large territories and several villages, the abbots and priors of these monasteries held positions like those of the most powerful secular land-holders. They attended the diets of Friesland, and in the second part of the Middle Ages, took an active part in the political quarrels that set the whole country afire and nearly caused the loss of its political independence. In mentioning the "diets" of Friesland, the plural must be used because the old Terp-land did not form a political entity, not even a political federation. Each *gouw* or *go*, the ancient district, remained separate, and until the present day the old names of Oostergo and Westergo are used by the people of Friesland as those of Fivelgo and Hunzingo are used by the people of Groningen. A late medieval attempt to group some of the *gos* for judicial purposes, the alliance of the *Upstalbom*, never ripened into political federation. The organization sprang up during the XIIth century in East Friesland, now the extreme northwestern corner of Germany, and around 1325 the other Frisian districts joined the group. As soon, however, as the Westergo of Friesland sought to transform this loose judicial organization into defensive alliance, and into a political federation for the defense of Frisian freedom, the group fell apart.

In Holland the presence of a territorial prince made the political organization of that province widely different from that of Friesland. It would be a great mistake, however, to overestimate the power of that prince and his fellow rulers in the Low Countries, the counts of Guelders, the dukes of Brabant, and the bishops of Utrecht. The presence of a ruler secured within these territories a certain tranquillity that was lacking in Friesland, but in the early Middle Ages it did not prevent feuds among vassals and the arbitrary levying of tolls on skippers and traders. As a rule, the princes of a coastland like the Netherlands were too well aware of the



importance of trade to obstruct the free movement of merchants. Moreover, the power of the prince was limited. His authority never superseded the rights of his subjects. In the principalities of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries, the rights of the prince and of the people were pretty well defined. In territories like Holland, where the large majority of the inhabitants were free men, the lord's opportunities of encroachment were few.

The prince had some of the prerogatives of sovereignty. Charlemagne had installed "counts" in all districts to preside over the popular assemblies and to regulate their judicial proceedings. It had also been the task of the Carolingian counts to lead the militia of the district to the meeting place of the royal army. The counts of the XIIth and XIIIth centuries still exercised this right, but for their own benefit. At times they summoned inhabitants of their territory to take part in their quarrels with neighbors, but local custom regulated the obligation of military service and greatly reduced its scope. Usually it extended only to the personal vassals of the prince, except in emergencies. Outside these quasi-sovereign rights, the local ruler disposed only of his own domain, that is his personal estate, his share in the fines imposed by the courts, certain tithes acquired with property which was once ecclesiastical, and other sources of income granted by the king or ceded by others. Modern democratic states, and of necessity the dictatorships into which some have grown, are sovereign in the full sense of the word. Their authority knows no limit, provided the majority of the voters accept it. Nobody would concede greater rights to a medieval prince than he possessed by the law of custom or had acquired by royal patent in the days when royal authority was still strong. But even the king's own fiat often failed to make the people bow before an authority they did not consider legitimate.

Indeed the people expressed their views on this subject most clearly and unceremoniously. Several counts of Holland—one of them a "King of the Romans," aspiring to become emperor—died ignominiously with hundreds of their knightly vassals under the clubs and swords of the Frisian peasants upon whom they sought to impose their rule. A bishop of Utrecht shared the same fate at the hands of the peasants of Drente, who slew him in the peatmoor bordering their land. The occasions on which bishops of Utrecht had to flee their residence are too numerous to be recorded here. It happened at the end of the XIIIth century, when the peasants of northern Holland joined the inhabitants of Utrecht in a general revolt against their lords. It happened again a few decades later when the townspeople of Flanders and partisans from Zeeland nearly conquered the whole eastern half of the Low Countries. In most of these uprisings the final outcome of the military campaign was in favor of the lords, but the political result was

the maintenance or extension of popular rights, the princes being wholly unable to strengthen their sovereignty.

Within his hereditary "domain" the authority of the lord was absolute. Beyond it he could accomplish nothing without the consent of his subjects. After the middle of the XIIth century, after the death of Frederick Barbarossa who had temporarily restored the authority of the central government, the princes of the Netherlands were able to ignore with impunity the sovereignty of the kings of Germany. They could never ignore the remaining elements of popular authority, dating back to ancient Germanic times. The territorial counts, either in person or through representatives, continued to make the rounds of their territory, presiding over the meetings of the people to render justice or to deliberate on administrative affairs. It is true that old forms of popular government were gradually modified, that the mass meetings of the people either lost all meaning and went out of use, that they became meetings of vassals and principal landowners with a purely feudal character; but new forms of self-rule sprang up to take the place of the old ones. There was a direct connection between the late medieval institution of the States Assembly and the ancient gathering of free men.

The counts of Holland, who at the traditional time and place still gathered around them the people of the countryside for the discussion of special questions, had profoundly modified the judicial system by reserving all important criminal cases to their own court, composed of their leading vassals and servants. Thus the higher courts of the county became instruments of the central administration, although it would be wrong to assume that the personal influence of the ruler was predominant in matters of justice. The members of the court nearly always belonged to a class with a strong sense of personal independence, and would not have brooked arbitrary interference. Minor misdemeanors continued to be dealt with by the local courts, of which there was one in nearly every parish. Here the appointee of the count, the *Schout*, was the prosecutor. Until the end of the XIIIth century, judgment was pronounced in the old Germanic fashion by some expert of customary law, and at least theoretically approved by the people. Later, from the days of Count Florent V (1256-1296) the bench of *Scabini* or jurors which had functioned in the southern Low Countries since the Carolingian period, replaced the traditional local court.

This undoubtedly strengthened the authority of the central administration. Originally members of the bench were appointed either by the count from among the principal landowners of the village or elected by the people. For a while the counts hesitated between these two systems, anxious to obtain control, yet loath to provoke the anger of their turbulent people. A compromise resulted in the formation of an oligarchic regime, the re-

tiring jurors presented two lists of candidates to the prince from which he elected the new appointees.

In a rapidly developing territory like Holland, old customs and institutions could not be maintained permanently. Where the constant struggle against the waters, the construction of dykes and dams required the personal attention of the ruler, a public administration grew up much faster than in the poor and conservative eastern districts. The counts began to appoint bailiffs, who presided over the higher courts and administered the princely domain. On the other hand marshland reclamation created new local forms of self-government. Responsible for the maintenance of the dykes the prince delegated that duty primarily to those whose land was immediately affected. Each village, therefore, became responsible for a definite section, and all the inhabitants were obliged to do their share of the common task. So, in practice, the administration of these works was in the hands of the villagers. Their representatives, the jurors where such officials existed, decided all questions pertaining to the dykes. They made regulations, drafted the inhabitants of their village for work, imposed taxes to meet expenses, and punished the recalcitrants and all who neglected their duty. The counts never interfered with the decisions of these dyke-administrators. The long, heavy sea-dykes, stretching along the coast of the Zuiderzee or along the rivers, made cooperation among villages essential. It was organized in the same democratic way.

If the dyked-in area was new land reclaimed from the sea or marshes and recently settled, the organization was slightly different. Here the maintenance of the *polder*, the technical unit of drained land, was naturally entrusted to the owners and cultivators of the newly won soil. In such cases too, the officials of the count acted as supervisors, but the actual administration was directly controlled by the farmers who, more often here than in the older villages, elected their own representatives. These were the beginnings of the *waterschappen*, the self-governing bodies for the administration of the *polder*-land which have continued to function to this day.

The people of the eastern plains, living on firmer soil than their neighbors of the north and west, clung tenaciously to old customs and liberties which in other districts had given way to more modern institutions. They were also slower to break down the social barriers dividing the various classes of the population. The amount of arable land was strictly limited. The villages of Drente were hemmed in by far-flung peatmoors, still unsuitable for colonization. The wind-swept dunes and the pine forests of the Veluwe offered slim inducement to new settlers. For a while the expanding population found homes by draining the lowland near the mouth of the IJssel and by clearing land east of that river, but this possibility was

soon exhausted. If the power of the territorial lords had been greater, even this small outlet for excess population might not have existed; for the local rulers claimed title to all wild land, as heirs of the royal prerogative. The tradition of freedom was too strong however, among the Saxon agrarian communities, to permit this. The people of Zwolle and other communities of Overijssel fought and won a centuries-long lawsuit against their lords, the bishops of Utrecht, for the ownership of the "Mastenbroek," a stretch of reclaimed land at the mouth of the IJssel. The scarcity of new land tended to stabilize existing conditions, to restrict the economic freedom of the newcomer by making the "mark association" a closed community of hereditary shareholders, and to strengthen feudal ties. In the west and north there was space in which to move and to expand, and this loosened the social structure. In the east, the lack of space tightened the bonds of the people. This lack of social change militated against any early development of new forms of administration. At a time when the counts of Holland already administered their territory through bailiffs, removable officials appointed for a limited term, the bishops of Utrecht still followed the old custom of traveling through the *gouws* of their territory to meet the free men at the *ding*. Drente, the free districts which now form the province of Overijssel, the *gouws* of Salland and Twente, and the district of Vollenhoven were visited in turn. As social institutions became more stiff and narrow, the gatherings of the free men shriveled into meetings of estate owners among whom, by the end of the XIIIth century, ministeriales formed the great majority. The people were no longer represented except through the principal landowners of each parish, Drente the least accessible and the poorest of all the episcopal possessions alone excepted. Here the nobleman, almost as poor as his peasant, a mere pauper compared to the prosperous fiefholders of Holland and Zeeland, never rose much above the general level.

In all these territories the old customary law prevailed, and seems to have sufficed, when in the more progressive territories of the West the need had long been felt for codification and adaptation to new conditions. In Holland and Zeeland, around 1300, every rural district had its *keur*, its local code of private law, based wholly upon ancient traditions but more or less adjusted to circumstances and formally promulgated by the count. The East was almost a century later in codifying its traditions, and Drente did not receive its *landrecht* until the Middle Ages had well nigh passed. It is noteworthy that geographic conditions alone, and not political factors, determined the difference between East and West. The western part of the episcopal state of Utrecht, the *Sticht*, geographically one with Holland, followed the social development of that country step by step, while the

episcopal lands beyond the IJssel remained distinct not only in institutions but in natural conditions.

South of the riverbelt, the effect of feudal institutions on social conditions was much greater than north of that dividing line. To put it more accurately, the resistance of ancient traditions to feudal institutions was weaker. The southern part of Limburg formed a section by itself, for as early as the VIIth century, under the Carolingians, large estates had been characteristic of the social system and Roman influence had created conditions quite distinct from those of the purely Germanic North. The vast plain between the Scheldt and Rhine, stretching north and south some twelve miles west of the Meuse, divided by the moors of the Peel, presented still other aspects. West of the moors, where the soil was poor, and most settlements dated only from the Frankish period, the villages were but small strips of cultivated land along the rivulets that ran through the vast heath. The powerful dukes of Brabant who, at the end of the XIth century, became lords of this district, firmly secured their seigneurial rights over the waste lands, the usufruct of which they sometimes granted to the villagers for a yearly quit-rent. In other cases they granted the land itself to monasteries or to secular and ecclesiastical landowners. In this area, where feudal institutions took deep root, bondage lasted no longer than in other parts of the country. It was less important in the south of the Netherlands than in the east but a class of free farmer-owners could not develop. In Brabant the peasant was and remained a tenant. The lords of the soil, whose returns were meager enough, sought to acquire extra income by serving as mercenary knights for foreigners or for their own dukes in the endless princely feuds of the Middle Ages.

Here again the influence of the monastic orders of Prémontré and Cîteaux was of great importance. As in Friesland and Groningen their monasteries contributed greatly to the reclamation of land, the only instances of monastic influence on the social order of the Netherlands. Even so, their influence was limited and there is no reason to assume that without them agrarian and social institutions would have developed differently than they actually did. The ancient order of the Benedictines was only sparsely represented in the Netherlands, and its most important monastery, Egmond, was virtually the property of the counts of Holland. Here as elsewhere it pursued culture and learning, while the monks of Prémontré and Cîteaux took an active part in the ministry. Only in a few Netherland provinces did the clergy vote in the states assemblies which, from the XIVth century, were associated with the councils of the princes.

In this curious society, with its blending of old Germanic and feudal institutions, the average individual continued to enjoy great personal free-

dom and independence. This explains the rapid rise of small communities of traders and craftsmen, the continuation in some cases of ancient Roman-Germanic towns such as Nijmegen and Maastricht. In Nijmegen, the palace of the emperors, founded by Charlemagne and gloriously rebuilt by Frederick Barbarossa, reminded people of the town's ancient origin. In Maastricht the churches of Saint Servatius and the Holy Virgin, with their monasteries, provided a direct link with Roman times. The settlements themselves were hardly distinct in outward appearance from other communities with a less illustrious past. Among these, Utrecht was first, proud of the traditions of Willibrord, first bishop of the Frisians, and of its position as an episcopal see, even though the burghers constantly rebelled against their lord. Then there was Deventer, the town of Saint Lebuinus, already a small port in Saxon times that grew in prosperity. To the north, at the end of the sandy ridge which protrudes into the Frisian lowlands, an old royal estate developed into a trading village and then into the prosperous town of Groningen. Politically, the Groningers were subjects of the bishops of Utrecht but, protected in the rear by the rebellious peasants of Drente, they turned east and north to take a brisk part in Frisian affairs and Hanseatic trade. So did Stavoren, a small open fishing village on the Zuiderzee. In the XIIth century Holland, rich in cities as it was to be, boasted only a few villages such as Leiden and Dordrecht which might by courtesy be called towns. Its trade was still unimportant and, until the end of the XIIth century the small town of Tiel, situated inland on the river Waal, was the main emporium of the Netherlands, a position it had inherited from Dorestad when that town was destroyed by the Vikings.

All these towns were open places without walls or fortifications. In 1150 the selfwilled Groningers were obliged to promise that they would not fortify their town, and there are numerous other instances of this tendency on the part of princes to prolong their control over urban communities. It is completely wrong, however, to envision the towns as "squalid abodes of ignorance and misery," the inhabitants of which could only with difficulty tear themselves free, to quote John Motley once more, from "the wolfish protection of some little potentate." If we turn to the medieval chroniclers, we obtain a different picture. A chronicler of the XIth century described the merchant people of Tiel on the Waal as follows:

"These men are rough and not accustomed to discipline. They do not render justice according to law, but they follow in this matter their own free will and pretend that the emperor has confirmed this right to them in a charter. They simply deny the debts they have contracted and even if guilty of public perjury cannot be convinced of their faults. If one of

them holds something in his left hand and if it is so small that he can hide it in his fist, he will lift the right hand to swear that he has not got it. They do not consider adultery a crime. Better than anything else, they love to drink and he who cracks the dirtiest jokes and makes the others drink gains the greatest praise. They even collect money to buy up all the good wines they can find during the year and with these, celebrate the great feasts of the Church, as if there were solemnity in drunkenness."

The democratic character of medieval Netherland society was strikingly revealed in the Crusades. In general, the Crusades were an undertaking of the nobility and, from the beginning, there existed some concern among the leaders that out of general enthusiasm for the good cause, a popular movement might rise and eventually get out of control. When the first Crusade was preached, thousands of simple people marched out to the East without waiting for the guidance of the nobles. We need only recall how scornfully the chroniclers of the Crusades speak of the "rabble" which found a miserable and not undeserved end in the deserts of Anatolia, to know how disgusted the nobles, professional fighting men, were to see others intrude into their sphere. They did not always preserve this haughty attitude and at times their disdain for the common fighting man changed to deep gratitude. When, exhausted and in dire need of supplies, the knights of the first Crusade reached the coast of Syria and undertook the siege of the Arabian strongholds, they were overjoyed to receive unexpected support from small fleets of North Sea ships of whose presence they had not the slightest idea. Sometimes these audacious sailors are called "pirates" by our sources, sometimes they are recognized by them as comrades in the holy war. Among them are Scandinavians, Englishmen, Flemings, Normans, Frisians and at least in one case the men of Tiel are specifically mentioned. They had made the long voyage to the Levant without difficulty or hardship, which had cost the knights endless exertion and sacrifice.

In no Crusade was the role of the North Sea skippers and merchants more important than in that of 1147, after Bernard of Clairvaux had traveled through the southern Low Countries and the Rhineland preaching the holy war. Once more the kings of France and Germany led their knights overland to Anatolia. The merchants of Cologne, the skippers of Friesland, the men of Flanders and England organized a Crusade of their own. Their ships gathered at Dartmouth, where each crew elected its representative to the common council of war. The rules of discipline were settled by common consent. Headed by their elected leaders, the force, with only a few noblemen among them, sailed for the coast of Portugal to seek entrance into the Mediterranean. The king of Portugal besought them to

take part in the siege of Lisbon and the majority of the Crusaders assented in the hope of adequate reward for their services. They conquered a capital for the young Iberian kingdom, but there were constant quarrels between the selfwilled Flemings and the not less stubborn English, and between the Crusaders and the Portuguese king, who prudently held his soldiers in reserve and allowed the northerners to take the risk and gain the glory. Several times Crusaders from the North Sea stopped on their way to Palestine to assist the Portuguese kings against their hereditary foes. Flemish and English settlements were founded in the reconquered districts, some of them only to be destroyed again when the Moors recovered most of the territory they had lost. Count William of Holland assisted the Portuguese in the siege of Alcacer in 1218, but many of his Crusaders, independent Frisians, ignored his leadership and pushed on to the East where they took part in the invasion of Egypt.

The long voyages of the Frisians during the Crusades seem quite out of proportion to the then modest sea trade of the Netherlands. The great period of shipping and trading was still to begin, as we shall see in the next chapter. The Crusades were rather the cause than the result of the Netherlands seafaring, but it must not be forgotten that in the XIth century the reputation of the Frisians as sailors was well established. Adam, archbishop of Bremen, relates how Frisian sailors had penetrated into the arctic seas and had been driven by storms to an unknown land where the inhabitants lived in caves and possessed great quantities of gold. From such scanty evidence, XVIIth century Frisian historians, seeking to glorify their homeland over the more powerful province of Holland, asserted that as far back as the XIth century their ancestors had visited Mexico and even Chile. The story is characteristic of the megalomania of a certain class of Frisian authors after the Middle Ages, when the real glory of their country, their republican freedom, had been lost and their ancient institutions debased by oligarchic rule. The real contribution of the seafaring population to the growth of the Netherlands is too evident to need such gross exaggeration. One fact is clear however, from this fantastic story and from the true stories of the Crusades: the economic position of the Netherlands in relation to neighboring countries had changed considerably, a most important factor in the development of the Netherland people into a nation with its own character and organization.



## CHAPTER IV

### The Origin of the Netherland Nation

THE frequent use of the name "Netherlands" in the preceding chapters was inevitable. It would have been more accurate, however, to use some other designation. Until the XIIIth century, the Netherlands did not exist either as a political or as a cultural unit. The area now included within the boundaries of the Netherland state was in no way distinct from the adjacent territories. We have discussed its peculiar geographic aspects and their effect upon social organization. It developed some remarkable local institutions like those in Friesland and Holland. Similar development might be found in parts of northwestern Germany along the North Sea. The difference in social structure between the eastern Netherlands and Westphalia was the slightest. In the XIth and XIIth centuries, as in the days of Charlemagne, the Netherlands were still a forlorn corner of the great empire of West-European Christendom. Culturally, the lowlands at the mouth of the Rhine were wholly dependent upon the great centers of civilization in the Rhineland and in France.

The churches and monasteries of the Netherlands in the early Middle Ages—only few of which still exist—never presented the splendor of their prototypes in the Rhineland, Burgundy, and central France. The peculiar architecture of the Romanesque churches of Maastricht, Roermond, Utrecht, and Deventer shows that their builders followed the great tradition of the Rhinelandish school. The early sculpture of the Netherlands reveals a thin stream of cultural influence from the southeast, along the Meuse valley, where Liège was one of its main centers, to Utrecht and the Lowlands. The same current may be discerned in the development of literature. The only books written in the Netherlands before the middle of the XIIth century were Latin textbooks and Latin chronicles. In this respect, Utrecht and Maastricht were centers of activity. Here too, the connection of Utrecht and Maastricht, via the Meuse and Liège, with upper Lorraine and eastern France is easily noticeable. The old pilgrims' route still linked the tombs of Servatius of Maastricht, Lambertus of Liège, Stephen of Metz, and Lupus of Troyes, to a chain of shrines the pilgrim visited on his way to Rome.

In literary production, Maastricht and Utrecht, where the German kings

of the XIth century found ardent supporters in their struggle with the Papacy, preceded the other cultural centers of the Netherlands by more than a century. The first weak attempt at historiography in the coastal district of Holland dates from 1125, and for nearly a century after that neither Holland nor Friesland produced a single literary work, while in southern Limburg, as early as 1170, Hendrick van Veldeke created his "Legend of Saint Servaes," the great epic of the patron saint of Maastricht and of his town and church. This poem of more than six thousand lines was written in the native tongue and is thus the oldest Dutch literary monument that has come down to us. It represented the Imperial tradition and Veldeke himself enjoyed the protection of the Imperial court where he became one of the standard bearers of medieval German poetry. Yet his work at Maastricht marks the beginning of a new period in the history of the Low Countries.

In the same decades in which Veldeke's art flourished, Flanders produced a number of literary works in the vernacular. It may well be that there existed older monuments of Dutch letters that have been lost.<sup>7</sup> Even so, the preservation of a number of Dutch writings, all dating back to the close of the XIIth century, definitely indicates that only from that period did Dutch literary activity really become intense. Flanders and southern Brabant were its centers. The northern Low Countries followed in the XIIIth century, first with new Latin historical works, then with the first chronicles composed in the vernacular. The southern provinces, meanwhile, had produced some of the greatest achievements in old Dutch literature, the mystic writings of Beatrijs of Nazareth and Hadewijch of Antwerp, composed in the first half of the XIIIth century.

This is not the place for an extensive review of XIIIth and XIVth century medieval Dutch literature. There was one outstanding literary figure, renowned rather for the number of his works than for their artistic qualities. This was Jacob van Maerlant, a Fleming who spent part of his life in the territories of the count of Holland. Maerlant started his literary career with the translation of French romances, but then turned to scientific, religious, and historical poetry partly adopted from the French, partly from the Latin. Whatever our opinion of the quality of his art may be, it contained very little that was original. The authors of *Van den Vos Reynaerde*, a Flemish adaptation of Reynard the Fox, showed far greater originality and their work is a real masterpiece of realistic narration. That same realism is illustrated by another of the very few original literary works in medieval Dutch, the story of *Karel ende Elegast*, the saga of King Charlemagne turned thief by divine inspiration. The XVth century was to see a fuller development of original Dutch literature.

By that time, however, a new civilization with its own peculiarities had grown up in the Low Countries. As soon as the Low Countries ceased to be a forlorn corner in a great continental kingdom, and became the cross-roads of European trade and the meeting point of strong currents of civilization, they were to produce a national art, inspired by the traditions of their people and conditioned by the nature of the country. This change did not occur overnight, of course. The trading centers on the lower Rhine branches, Dorestad and Tiel, foreshadowed the later importance of Dordrecht and the IJssel towns. The Vikings in their piratical excursions from the north, were the grim pathfinders of the later Scandinavian trade. The Flemings, who joined the great Norman enterprise of 1066, and acquired estates in conquered England, re-established the ancient connections between the two countries bordering the North Sea.

Politically too, the kingdoms and feudal states of northwestern Europe were drawn closer together. The growing strength of the French monarchy clashed with the feudal rights of the Angevin lords of England and the French coastlands; and Flanders automatically became a central pivot of English, French, and local Netherland interests. The first dramatic expression of these new tensions occurred at the beginning of the XIIIth century when the allied English-Flemish and Saxon-German forces, supported by Count William of Holland and Friesland, met the army of King Philip Augustus of France on the battlefield of Bouvines (1214). The crushing defeat of the allies not only decided the fate of the possessions of the English crown in France, but also determined the future development of the Low Countries. From that day the feudal states of the lowlands were subjected to constant political pressure from the south. The defeat of the Imperial troops, followed in Germany by the reign of a prince of the House of Hohenstaufen who was more Italian than German, and the consequent decline of the Germanic monarchy, further loosened the ties of the border-states with the central government. At the end of the century a king of Germany who came to the Netherlands to assert his suzerainty over the counties of Holland and Zeeland, was ignominiously driven from the royal castle at Nijmegen and forced to flee to Germany by the prince he sought to dispossess.

The internal weakness of England and the peaceful reign of Louis IX in France retarded the political reorientation of the Low Countries. In the economic field, also, the XIIIth century seemed one of preparation for the sudden outburst of energy that the XIVth was to bring. This lull left the princes of the Low Countries free to strengthen the structure of their small states. It gave the Netherlands town-communities time to develop their social and political institutions, a task which was completed, how-

ever, without many dramatic incidents. Textbooks often have it that as a rule the feudal lords of western Europe opposed the development of town-communities and that the freedom of the burgher class was won in hard and bloody conflicts. This is by no means correct. In northern France, where the cities dated back to Roman times and had to regain their autonomy after centuries of decay, these struggles were frequent; but in the Netherlands, where towns sprang up under the supervision of the feudal princes, the situation was totally different. It is significant that some of the older towns (Tiel, Utrecht, and Deventer) had to struggle with their overlords for autonomy, while more recent communities, which had originated under the aegis of feudal princes, developed freely. Special factors intervened. In Utrecht, the conflict with the prince was also a collision between a purely secular and a predominantly ecclesiastical organization. The towns of more recent origin, which included nine-tenths of the Netherlands communities, did not find princely authority an obstacle to self-government; on the contrary they received strong support from it. We have seen that initially some princes objected to fortification of the towns, but most of them quickly saw the great advantages they would derive from the building and garrisoning of fortresses at the expense of the citizens. Against the case of Groningen, mentioned above, we have that of 's Hertogenbosch, founded and fortified by order of the duke of Brabant for the protection of his northeastern frontier.

Local potentates everywhere fostered the growth of markets and trading places. They readily understood that an increase of population and of income must result in an increase of wealth and power for themselves. Like 's Hertogenbosch in Brabant, Alkmaar and Medemblik in Holland were organized as frontier posts, here against the still-turbulent West-Frisians. At Haarlem, where the coastal road behind the dunes passed over a narrow neck of land between the North Sea and the deep inlet of the IJ, a community formed itself around the castle which controlled that strategic spot. At Leiden, an old fortress on a dead branch of the Rhine saw a group of traders gather around its walls. At Dordrecht, a toll house and a fishing hamlet were the beginnings of Holland's oldest city. At Middelburg in Zeeland, a village of traders and fishermen rapidly gained importance through its contacts with England and Flanders. Utrecht still derived lustre from the court of the bishop, the spiritual leader of the whole territory north of the riverbelt. Nijmegen, whose existence as a river port dated from Roman times, had no overlord but the Emperor himself and for nearly two decades, from 1230 to 1248, was a free Imperial city, the only one of this type that ever existed in the Netherlands. Kampen, Zwolle, and Zutphen entered into competition with the older town of Deventer as trading centers, link-

ing the Zuiderzee trade with that of the Rhine. In the same way Roermond and Venlo on the Meuse competed with ancient Maastricht. Far to the north, Groningen, at first one of the most important centers of trade in the Frisian sector, became the principal market place of the rich coastal districts. Many small towns grew up around the castles of minor nobles. Of them, Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom and, greatest of all, Amsterdam rose to prominence. These communities which later became important towns were not the only ones, and in many cases not the first to receive charters from their princes. Among the earliest places to receive autonomy were Domburg and Westkapelle, fishing hamlets in Zeeland, and Muiden, a small village at the mouth of the Vecht on the Zuiderzee. The charter of the village of 's Gravenzande in Holland is half a century older than that of Amsterdam. Het Gein and Eembrugge, now as in the Middle Ages obscure hamlets, have held the rank of town since the latter half of the XIIIth century.

The policy of the feudal princes was to grant limited autonomy to all places which might eventually become trading centers, either as local markets or as sea and river ports. Few Netherland towns were *founded*—in the strict sense of the word—by a local ruler, but the princes were lavish in granting privileges wherever they believed there was a chance of communal development. The bishops of Utrecht, in spite of their attitude towards their residential town, made strenuous efforts to raise the villages of Rijsen and Ommen, small communities on the eastern sandy plains, to the status of self-governing towns. Neither the protection of a prince nor the legal establishment of freedom, however could change a rural community into a town. The decisive factors were economic. Amsterdam and Rotterdam, among the latest places recognized as towns, were the only ones to become great cities.

The charter rights granted to these communities included jurisdiction over their inhabitants and the power to issue ordinances in special matters. Their charters never provided complete constitutions but only stipulated the extent to which the laws of the towns might deviate from the law of the land. The same classes of people can be found in the rural districts and in the towns. The common rule that "the town made free" was not strictly adhered to, for a number of bondsmen paid personal taxes to their overlords even after taking up residence within the walls of a town. Seigneurial monopolies did not always cease before the gates of all towns. Within the walls of Maastricht the two overlords of the place maintained their seigneurial mills. Many such instances could be given to prove that initially the towns remained part of the larger social community and that only gradually, as their power increased, were urban communities distinguished

sharply from the surrounding rural area. With their increase of power, a reverse action started. The towns began the economic penetration of the rural districts around their walls. The definition mentioned above, formulated by one of the best Netherlands historians of the Middle Ages, explains also the great local differences in communal organizations.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the charters can be grouped into a number of "families"; for the advisors of the prince did not always go to the trouble of drafting a new instrument, but took an existing charter as a model.

One may speak of a western and an eastern group of charters. Middelburg's laws were given to all the towns of Zeeland. The towns of Holland mostly followed the model of Haarlem, which in turn derived its institutions from 's Hertogenbosch and indirectly from Louvain. The eastern towns had as their models either the laws of Aachen, Nijmegen, and the towns on the Meuse or as in Guelderland the laws common to the free cities of Germany. Deventer was the mother city of a number of towns east of the IJssel. The Frisian communities grew out of the popular institutions of their province. In the West, the laws of the towns originated either in Brabant or locally, in the East they were closely related to common German forms of organization.

The amazing activity of local princes in promoting institutions of self-government, such as the towns and the *waterschappen*, could bear fruit only under a favorable political and economic constellation in northwestern Europe. Some of the economic factors were internal; others were of more general character. The reclamation of land and improvement of the soil wrought a considerable change in agricultural conditions in the Netherlands. The imperfectly drained marshlands and coastal strips of the early Middle Ages had provided good sheep runs and encouraged wool production. Widespread weaving of woollen goods was practiced in the homes. In those days Frisian villages produced woollen goods for export all over northern Europe. This surplus production stimulated overseas trade. Until the XIIIth century, Frisian merchants peddled their goods from Britain to eastern Germany. Men from Groningen were present in Smolensk in 1224 when a number of German traders concluded a trade agreement with the prince of that city.

With the progress of reclamation and drainage, the coastal marshlands could be put to better use than sheep raising. Cattle breeding and wheat growing took its place. More hands found work on the land while the manufacture of woollen goods declined. It concentrated more and more in the county of Flanders where raw wool was provided from England. These factors help to explain the diminishing importance of the Frisian sea trade. Groningen retained its connections with England, but not with

northeastern Europe. Instead, it gained in importance as the principal market for the fertile lowlands to the north of the city. An identical development took place in the western Netherlands. Utrecht, in the XIth century an emporium for the northern trade, declined in commercial importance. Holland, prospering through the increase of its natural resources, had but few foreign trade relations. In all these respects, the XIIIth century is a period of transition. The old ties were gradually loosened. New ones were to be made in the XIVth century.

Such were the internal economic developments. Their importance can not be compared to that of external factors, the greatest of which was the "opening" of the Baltic Sea. In the early XIth century the then important countries of Norway and Denmark still looked west. It was the age of Canute the Great and the Danish invasion of England. Sweden was not yet a united state. A century later, Denmark had turned to the east and begun her expansion along the Baltic coast. At the same time, Sweden was constituted as a kingdom and expanded over Finland. The dukes of Saxony founded Luebeck in 1143, and then began the rapid march along the Baltic coast which culminated in the crusades of the Teutonic Order in the XIIIth century. By the middle of that century, the main objects of the expansion had been achieved, and German trade began to profit from this rapid spread of German culture and settlements. The Wendic League, the alliance between Luebeck and Hamburg, and the German merchants' guild of Wisby were formed, creating the foundations for the greater Hanseatic League. The "opening" of the Baltic Sea and the way in which it was accomplished were important factors in determining the fate of the Netherlands. Had the Baltic not gained the great importance it held from the XIIIth to the XVIIIth century, the Netherlanders would never have become the nation and state they now are. When the Scandinavian countries adopted Christianity and were drawn into the orbit of West-European civilization, when the Baltic Sea became a center of trade, the geographic position of the Low Countries underwent a fundamental change.

In the early Middle Ages the Low Countries had acted as intermediary in the trade between Britain and western Germany. The volume of the trade was modest. As it increased in importance, the German Rhine cities formed direct connections with England. In the XIIIth century this led to the gradual decline of the river trade of Tiel and Deventer in favor of Cologne. The direct outlets of the Rhine into the sea favored communications between Cologne and London. Only Dordrecht, advantageously located at a crossing of waterways, derived real profit from the Rhine shipping, largely because the counts of Holland strongly supported its staple-rights. With the opening of the Baltic and the concentration of wool

manufacturing in Flanders, the picture changed radically. Once these two economic centers were brought into direct contact, the Low Countries as a whole found themselves on the crossroads of international trade. The complement of this new economic connection was trade with southern Europe. The gradual shifting from the land to the sea route between northwestern Europe and Italy further improved the position of the Low Countries. Flanders, Brabant, and Holland learned to look west instead of east, towards the sea instead of towards the Continent. This was the basic difference between the XIIIth and the XIVth century Netherlands.

It is remarkable that the various parts of the Netherlands shared unequally in the new development. As we have seen Friesland and Groningen lost importance, and Utrecht too, declined. The towns of Flanders entered upon a period of lasting glory. The role of intermediary between Flanders and the Baltic, and between the Baltic and the Rhineland, was taken by the "IJssel towns," Kampen, Zwolle, Zutphen, and Deventer. To the northwest of these trading centers, the counties of Zeeland and Holland, were left out of the combination. This peculiar situation was reflected in the organization of trade. The IJssel towns, and in fact, nearly all Netherland towns east of Utrecht, belonged to the Hanseatic League which also had a "factory" in Bruges. The towns of Holland and Zeeland, however, never belonged to the Hansa. The geographic location of these two counties, kept alive the seafaring traditions of the inhabitants, however. Though the sea trade of Holland and Zeeland was of little importance until the XIVth century, around 1350 it began to increase rapidly. Middelburg, close to Bruges, enjoyed its share of Flanders' prosperity. Amsterdam and some of the smaller towns began to take part in the Baltic trade, the "mother-trade" of all Netherland commerce. The marvelous expansion of this trade during the next hundred years became the main source of Holland's later wealth and glory.

It was only at the end of the XIVth century that the cornerstone of Holland's economic structure was laid by a technical invention, a new method of salting herring, which permitted the preservation of the fish over a long period and its export to distant territories. In 1384, Willem Beukels of Zeeland discovered that by cutting and gutting the fish immediately after the catch, and depositing it in barrels in alternate layers with salt of good quality, the product could be safely stored.<sup>9</sup> From that time the herring fisheries north and west of the Doggerbank were a gold mine for the Netherland coastal area. The XVth century saw a further technical improvement when, in 1416, a citizen of Hoorn on the Zuiderzee knotted the first large fishing net, making possible the use of larger ships and mass production of the new export. In another chapter we shall see how these inventions



transformed the economy of Holland and thus wrought considerable changes in northwestern Europe.

The growing economic power of Holland and Zeeland, outside the Hanseatic League, but in the same field, foreshadowed a conflict the outcome of which was to determine the fate of the Netherlands. The cooperation between the towns of Holland and those of the Hanseatic League could last only as long as Amsterdam's trade was of minor importance.

The change in economic relationships and the growing importance of the western coastland were naturally accompanied by a corresponding change in political relations. As soon as the Low Countries acquired a central position in the economy of western Europe, the neighboring monarchies began to take a lively interest in their political status. This sudden international concern in the fate of the Lowlands was just in time to prevent a one-sided penetration of the area. In Chapter III, it was pointed out that the national evolution of the Netherlands would have been thwarted if France and Germany had both developed into strongly organized monarchies at the same time. Fortunately, the German kings had already met with defeat in their attempt at centralization before the French monarchy began to consolidate its position. In the XIIIth century, after the battle of Bouvines, French influence grew rapidly. King Louis IX and King Philip IV intervened in the quarrels of Brabant, Hainaut, and Guelders. Constant pressure weakened the power of the counts of Flanders. This political penetration unhindered from the east because of the disruption of the German monarchy, threatened to bring the Low Countries within the French sphere of influence.

Economic as well as political reasons forced the kings of England to intervene. Edward I sought to establish an anti-French league of Netherland princes, a policy which had its most dramatic results in the well known revolt of Bruges and the battle of the Spurs at Courtrai in 1302. The murder of Count Florens of Holland, a partisan of France, and the subsequent popular revolt against the murderers, form part of this episode. Though less important for general history, it has become part and parcel of the Netherland tradition because three and a half centuries later it formed the subject of dramas by Hooft and Vondel, two of Holland's greatest authors. In the conflict between the two great powers, the feudal princes of the Netherlands played a rather miserable role. They actually served as mercenaries of both kings and readily betrayed their momentary ally for a higher bribe from the enemy. Only the part taken by the people, the momentous uprising of the Flemish peasants and townspeople and the reaction of the people of Holland who rose to drive out foreign invaders gives color and interest to the story. To these popular movements the Low

Countries owe the fact that the political defeat of England and her princely allies left the existing social order, with its freedoms, undisturbed.

For three decades after this war, French influence was predominant throughout the Low Countries. Flanders was independent again, but humbled. Hainaut, Holland, and Zeeland were united under the dynasty of the Avesnes, who had distinct pro-French leanings. By them free institutions of Friesland were threatened for the first time in several centuries. Utrecht, to which the Avesnes had no claim, virtually became part of their possessions. Brabant alone for a while stood aloof, but was well-nigh crushed by the combined forces of the princes in the pay of France. To all this, England under Edward II could not offer the slightest opposition. A prince of the House of Avesnes accompanied the military expedition across the North Sea by which the unfortunate English king was dethroned and sent to his death.

The whole French network of diplomatic relations was roughly torn apart when Edward III of England decided to claim the continental inheritance of his ancestors. War broke out again, the first of the endless series of conflicts and campaigns usually grouped together as the Hundred Years' War. There is no need to follow in detail the diplomatic intrigues by which King Edward sought at great expense to make the Low Countries into an English bridgehead on the Continent.<sup>10</sup> The results were decidedly discouraging. The only important event of this first phase of the war was another revolt by the people of Flanders. This revolt, led by James of Artevelde, did not further the English plans but its final result was the neutralization of Flanders, which precluded further assistance to Edward from the side of the Netherlands.

The importance of the Low Countries in a general political combination had been proved beyond doubt. By the middle of the XIVth century they had become an economic force and a keystone in international relations. To gain a foothold in the Low Countries was the aim of the three competing powers of northwestern Europe. Violence and bribery had been tried by all and failed. There was another method—the more tender approach to power and influence through marriage. William III of Avesnes, count of Holland, and brother-in-law of the king of France, became father-in-law to kings and emperors, a distinction he owed probably more to geography than to the charms of his daughters. Count Reinold II of Guelders, raised to ducal rank, married a sister of the king of England. Louis of Bavaria, emperor and king of Germany, took one of Count William of Holland's daughters to wife. These exceptional family ties gave the feudal lords of the Low Countries a prestige far greater than they could have won for themselves. The full import of this matrimonial policy was

only apparent when the direct lines of the princely houses of the Netherlands became extinct.<sup>11</sup>

The war clubs of the Frisians established a foreign dynasty in Holland and Zeeland. William IV, son of William III, who took his title to the lordship of Friesland seriously, was defeated and killed by the staunch republican peasants, an ignominious death for one who had always endeavored to excel in chivalry. His sister, the wife of Louis of Bavaria, emperor of Germany, succeeded to his inheritance. But before the emperor could consolidate his position in the West, he died, leaving a branch of his family firmly established in the Low Countries. This was a great success for the Bavarian dynasty which was now drawn into western European politics. It led to a counter move by their rivals, the kings of Bohemia-Luxemburg who in the person of Charles IV, assumed the Imperial crown after the death of Louis.

When Wenzel, the brother of Charles IV, married the heiress of Brabant, the Luxemburg family greatly strengthened its position in the Low Countries. As duke of Brabant, Wenzel controlled the important trade route from the Scheldt to Cologne. At the beginning of the XIIIth century the dukes of Brabant had gained partial sovereignty over Maastricht; by the end of the century they had acquired Limburg and by the middle of the XIVth the county of Valkenburg. Thus, they dominated the ancient Roman highway between Cologne and Tongeren from which a new route branched off to Antwerp. The possession of Brabant with its mercenary chivalry which served in all the armies of western Europe and had gained immortal if rather lugubrious fame, was a coveted prize; and the Luxemburg dynasty rejoiced to have secured it. But here the same phenomenon occurred as in Holland: the Luxemburgs had acquired new lands, but in point of fact Brabant took a member of the dynasty to itself.

The Netherland territories had too much individuality to be passed like household objects from one member of a family to another. German princes transferred to the west coast were irresistibly drawn into the orbit of western politics and separated from the main body of Germany. On the other hand, the efforts of Edward III of England succeeded no better. Twice he tried to secure a stronghold on the Continent, first when during Artevelde's administration, he sought to have his son recognized as count of Flanders; again when he demanded Zeeland as his share in the inheritance of the Avesnes. Flanders refused to leave its "natural" prince, and Zeeland to be separated from Holland. This was not due to successful resistance by princely rulers but to the opposition of the people. The time when the fate of Netherland provinces could be decided by the whim of a feudal lord had gone forever.

Relations between the rulers and the ruled had been profoundly modified. Some of the causes of this change are of a general character. In the Netherlands, as everywhere else in western Europe, the revenues of the princes were no longer sufficient to meet their expenditures. The cost of administration, rudimentary as it was, gradually increased; and continuous warfare absorbed a disproportionate amount of treasure. The desire of the Netherland princes to figure prominently in international politics deepened their financial plight, as "selling-out" to France or England could fill their coffers only temporarily. If a prince followed the rules of chivalry, if he considered it his duty as a Christian knight to ride to Spain or to Baltic lands to hunt the Moor or the pagan Prussian, he usually ended in bankruptcy; and there were not a few of these chivalrous warriors among the Netherland feudal lords. Money had to be borrowed to carry on the administration, and the prospect of repayment always remained dubious. The inevitable result was that the debtor was obliged to hand over his regular sources of income to his creditors until his debts were paid. If the creditor was a foreign prince, this might mean the end of the territory's independence. Once the bishopric of Utrecht was nearly divided between the bishop's creditors, who unfortunately happened to be the counts of Holland and Guelders. It escaped from these dangerous creditors only to fall into the clutches of a group of wealthy citizens, who virtually forced Bishop John of Arkel to leave his principality so that they might rule alone and exploit the episcopal domain to their hearts' content.

Financial backers were usually found among a prince's subjects. In Brabant the towns had provided large sums since the end of the XIIIth century. They continued to provide their duke during the XIVth century but only on condition that they be given permanent control of the financial administration. This demand must not be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to wrest political control from the princes. It was a normal business policy. A banker does not lend money without security, and the towns of Brabant wanted control over the administration of the funds they provided. The prince might use his own money—when he had any—for whatever purposes he thought fit, but had to account for every penny he spent of his subjects' money. Moreover, he was not allowed to dissipate his "domain," from which eventual repayment was to come. So his financial backers restricted his right to mortgage part or whole of his estate. This had important political consequences.

For the first time in Netherland history, representative groups of the people expressed their will to stay together, to form a political unit. The desire to safeguard the principality against division or foreign control was the main point in the many charters which the dukes of Brabant, like other

princes of the Netherlands, were obliged to grant their subjects. By these charters, of which that of Cortenberg (1312) was among the earliest, the state of Brabant became a social unit, with a political character distinct from the status of its prince. Brabant provides a classic example of this new development of joint administration by a prince and his subjects. In each province the development showed characteristic features.

In Holland, Utrecht, and Guelders, an important part was played by a group of noblemen who, through princely favor or otherwise, rose above the ranks of the common gentry and served as the special advisors and financial supporters of the rulers. The rise in rank and power of one noble family above its former peers naturally led to party strife and civil war. The history of the XIVth and XVth century Netherlands is full of outwardly meaningless conflicts.<sup>12</sup> A number of prominent families were exterminated in these wars and others elevated so that by the middle of the XVth century there arose a new aristocracy, having estates in several provinces and therefore no longer bound to the interests of anyone. Together with the town this group gained a prominent place in the councils of the local princes.

All these new elements in political life—the rise of a provincial “national” sentiment, the limitation of the power of the prince by his financial backers, the evolution of new social groups inside and outside the nobility—combined with the old customs which obliged the ruler to consult with his vassals, created a new institution, that of the “States,” the meeting of a number of individuals and delegates of groups who, because of their social standing, represented the main political and economic forces of the country. Hugo Grotius, defending the sovereign rights of the States Assembly of his own age, tried to prove that this political organization was a direct continuation of the gathering of the ancient Germanic nobility, of the “leading men of the tribe” mentioned by Tacitus. More recent historians paint a totally different picture. For them, the States Assemblies started with the meetings of the vassals and clergy of the State, to which in due course, a third estate in the persons of representatives of the towns was added. The subject has recently been exhaustively studied, but the results are still far from clear.<sup>13</sup>

It seems evident that the Netherland States Assemblies grew out of the privy council of the prince. Customary law and his own interest obliged him to summon his principal fiefholders whenever important matters were discussed. The fiefholders were not so much great landowners as hereditary officials, holders of the *schout-ambt* in their *ambacht*—in other words, the chief officials and executives in their parishes. Thus, when all fiefholders were present, all parishes were represented. The prince, of

course, summoned his principal councilors and financiers (whom he nearly always provided with some estate or fief in order that they might take their place among his vassals), and also town councilors and other people of influence whose help he might need. In most Netherland provinces, this meeting of the enlarged council, though later called States after the French "Etats," did not originate as a representation of the classes of society. Otherwise it would have been impossible to exclude the clergy as was done in Holland, Guelders, and even in parts of the bishopric of Utrecht beyond the IJssel. In other provinces, a few ecclesiastics attended the meetings—the abbot of Middelburg in Zeeland and the abbots of the Brabant monasteries. The clerical hierarchy as such was nowhere represented. In the "Sticht" of Utrecht, where the chapters of the main churches were very influential, they really acted as a separate political and economic body, not as an ecclesiastical group. The monasteries in Brabant, built on land granted by the dukes and with their money, were taxed by the prince without being represented in the States until late in the XIVth century, when the abbots finally threatened to assert their privilege of tax-exemption under canon law, by appealing to the Pope, unless they were given a share in the financial control of the duchy.

If the States were not really representative of all classes of society, they were still less representative of the people, even of the people of the towns. Everywhere, in the rural districts as in the towns, there was a tendency to oligarchy. The village jurors were originally elected from the wealthier farmers, as were members of the boards controlling the drainage districts. As always—the same thing happens in modern democracies—people of social standing who are in a position to judge public affairs, secured a dominant influence. In many instances this was done by substituting cooptation of the council members for election, even long after election had become a merely nominal function. In 1400, Amsterdam received a new charter, under which members of the town council elected their own successors under limited control by the count of Holland. This and similar privileges laid the foundation for the oligarchic regime that characterized the Dutch republic in the seventeenth century. Briefly, the States Assemblies were enlarged councils to which all social-political entities within the state, that were important enough to make a real contribution in the common weal, had access, if they considered attendance worth while; if they did not, they rapidly lost their places as regular members.

With the great political change of the middle of the XIVth century the States rose to unprecedented prominence and power. The same thing happened in France and England; but it is remarkable that while in France the power of the States General was crushed within a short time, while in

England Parliament gained power only to be divested of it a century later, the States Assemblies of the Netherlands enjoyed unbroken progress in power and influence. This change came when the ruling families of the Low Countries became extinct and were replaced by foreign dynasties.

When the Bavarians succeeded the Avesnes in Holland, the nobles and towns of Holland and Zeeland forced the legal heir, the Empress Margareta of Avesnes, to cede the two counties to one of her younger sons, making it plain that they wanted a prince of their own. For the first time the people of these provinces spoke out in the matter of succession and virtually designated their own ruler. Seventy years later, they did the same thing again, only more drastically. Even so, they were moderate compared to the people of Brabant. In 1356, when Wenzel of Luxemburg succeeded on the ducal throne, the States of Brabant forced their ruler to grant a great charter, the *Joyeuse Entrée* so called because every duke had to swear to respect it before he was recognized as prince. This *Joyeuse Entrée* was a formal contract between the prince and the States with clearly defined rights and duties of the former. The prince swore to preserve the integrity of the state and its "national" character, to refrain from appointing foreigners to offices and from alienating any part of the ducal revenues, and to recognize the authority of the States in matters of taxation. Finally the charter gave the States the right to revolt if the prince broke his oath and violated the agreement.

Thus was established the constitutional function of the States Assemblies. From a board of advisors and financial backers, they had become a representative body that took its place by the side of the central authority, the prince. The importance of this political organism depended wholly upon the strength or weakness of the two parties. When a weak prince like Wenzel of Brabant ruled, practically all power fell to the States.

The XIIIth century had been a period of preparation. The XIVth saw the re-orientation of the Netherlands and the first economic expansion of Holland and Zeeland. Its last quarter marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Low Countries, during which a distinctly Netherland culture and art came into being. Until the fourteenth century, the Low Countries were hardly different from their nearest neighbors with whom they formed a social, political, and cultural unit. Earlier in this chapter reference was made to differences between the lowlands on the Rhine and the neighboring territories: early and wide-spread social and political freedom, with the popular institutions of Friesland as its most characteristic expression; the multiplicity of free communities, of which only some could grow into cities. In the development of liberal social institutions, the Netherlands were ahead of their southern and eastern neighbors, partly because

of the rise in the Netherlands of new institutions conditioned by the character of the soil, and partly because of the preservation of their ancient liberties.

Modern nationalism has a tendency to project the history of each nation into the distant past, when such nations did not even exist. Although it is necessary to go back to the earliest times to discover the elements from which particular peoples were later formed, one must guard against taking for granted national differences long before they came into being. Yet, dimly discernible in the thirteenth and clearly visible in the fourteenth century, are factors to justify the title of this chapter: "The Origin of the Netherland Nation."

We find but little evidence of this thesis in the history of medieval Netherland literature and art. Learning, always international in character, was more so in the Middle Ages when a belief in the basic unity of civilization still prevailed, and when the use of an international language was a prerequisite to recognition in learned circles. For the Low Countries, Paris was the center of intellectual life, not because French culture was admired but because until the XIVth century the University of Paris was the only important one in continental Europe north of the Alps. There is nothing in the works of the earlier medieval historians, theologians, and writers born in the Low Countries, that reveals their Netherland origin.

Gothic forms of architecture were imported from France, although Rhineland influences are discernible. Two major churches were built in the new style in close imitation of foreign models: the cathedral of Utrecht and the parish church (now also cathedral) of 's Hertogenbosch. In nearly all other cases where the Gothic style was tried, adaptations to specific Netherland requirements were made. Materials were lacking for the construction of the huge and imposing buildings so common in northern France, and the marshy soil of the western coastland could not sustain heavy monuments. Brick, the native building material, was less suited to Gothic forms, so the plan and structure of Netherland churches was simplified. In many cases, a timber roof took the place of the stone-ribbed vaulting. The profuse sculptural decoration of the French Gothic churches could not be imitated. Netherland architects reduced the height and extended the width of their churches which thus lost some of the outward characteristics of Gothic. The character of Dutch art was being determined by the nature of the soil and the materials it provided. The character of "the people" (supposing that this abstraction corresponds to any reality existing at the time we are discussing) had little to do with it.

Literature was dependent upon French and Latin models though some works show a realism that is often considered a typical Dutch trait. As in



Maerlant's later work, French examples were deliberately rejected in favor of Latin ones. This might be called the beginning of spiritual independence, though of a rather negative character. German influence was traceable in many mystic writings of the XIIIth and XIVth centuries and in the poetry of the later XIVth. The presence of Bavarian princes in Holland and Zeeland was not without effect in this respect, though French and Latin models predominated. Both the subjects and the forms of literary art are essentially international. Historians of literature have made many attempts to discover "national" characteristics in literary works of a period when no corresponding national sentiment existed. "A sense for crude comical situations seems to be part of our national character," wrote a distinguished Netherland professor of literature when discussing the vulgar yarns written in medieval Dutch. If so, the Netherland people share this trait with many other nations. The negroes of central Africa, sitting together in the tropic nights, or the people of southeast Asia, gathering to tell stories after a hard day's work, indulge largely in the same pastime. The only thing "characteristic" about medieval Dutch literature seems to be a rapid loss of interest in tales of chivalry and the growing popularity of subjects of more general interest. This, like the development of Netherland social institutions, may well have been influenced by the weakness of the feudal system. In a society where a ruling class, with its standards of chivalry, its nice distinctions, its fashions, its rules of "what is done and not done," did not dominate the more primitive, natural and spontaneous traits of human character, subjects of more general interest, religion and morals, were bound to be more popular. The sympathy for the lower classes revealed in many medieval Dutch works is characteristic. It is true of Jacob Van Maerlant, the one medieval Dutch poet of whom we have more than a dim perception. He apparently had a special sympathy for the lower classes of society. Many literary authorities ascribe to him the *Heimlicheit der Heimlicheden*, a Dutch translation of the *Secreta Secretorum*. This treatise, a Latin version of an Arabic original, was written as a manual on the art of life and of government. The Dutch translator made a few remarkable additions to his model when he translated the Latin verses:

"The prince, who is the people's pastor,  
Is by his nobles well protected."

His own lesson actually reverses the sense:

"The prince, who is the people's pastor,  
For he protects his poor subjects,  
The people of the lower classes,

Who, humble though they are,  
Are those providing all the world  
With everything it needs."

A few lines like these do not prove much, but there are further examples of the same trend of thought in other literary works.

It is not so much the *subject* or form of literary composition that attracts our attention in respect to the origin of the Netherland nation, but the language, the *means* by which it was expressed. It is unnecessary to repeat here that the dialects of the Low Countries formed part of the West Germanic linguistic group, with a gradual transition from Flemish in the southwest to Low German east of the present boundaries, and with the slowly retreating Frisian dialect as a distinct feature. The exact position of these medieval Dutch dialects in the general linguistic group as judged by modern philologists, is unimportant for our purpose, what we have to consider is how contemporary writers considered it. Their name for the language they wrote was *Dietsch*, the Flemish form of the common Germanic term of *Duitsch*, *Deutsch*, or *Dutch*, generally used by continental Germanic people to indicate the vernacular. So the term has no special meaning except when used to indicate a special West Germanic tongue in contrast to some other. Maerlant, in the thirteenth century, spoke of *Dietsch* as the common language of the inhabitants of the coastlands, a language of which he apparently considered the spoken language of Flanders, Brabant and Holland to be dialects. *Duitsch*, too, is used with the same significance, appearing in Flanders in 1360 when the Bible was *verduitscht*—i.e. translated into the vernacular.

The chronicle of Melis Stoke, concluded in 1305, refers to the northeastern districts of the present Netherlands as the Low Saxon country, in which he includes the Frisians. Here is an important contrast between the Germanic western coastlands and the interior. It is evident that the difference between *Dietsch* and French, the *Walsch* language, was strongly felt. The remarks of Stoke seem to indicate an identical, if far weaker, differentiation between the coastal Low Germanic and that of the interior. Combining this scanty evidence with that provided by the XVth and XVIth centuries, it is apparent that by the XIIIth century the Low Countries began to feel linguistically different from the greater West Germanic community, but that the new linguistic boundaries by no means coincided with these of the present Netherland and Belgian states. They included only Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, and perhaps Utrecht. In other words, they encompassed exactly the same territory as was drawn into the orbit of the western powers through the influence of economic and political factors.

Fourteenth century Netherlands, though they had many traits and interests in common did not feel themselves politically or nationally related in any way. When traveling abroad, they never claimed any "nationality" other than their citizenship in the local community. Students who traveled to foreign universities inscribed their names in the registers as "citizens of Ghent, of Antwerp, or of Dordrecht." A citizen of Dordrecht laid the foundation for the Santa Maria dell' Anima pilgrim hospital in Rome destined for the "natio almanorum," the nation of the "Dutch" (i.e. *dietsch*, *duitsch*, or *deutsch*).

There is one exception to the rule that the medieval Netherlands recognized only local nationality, and that is the case of the Frisians. Throughout the Middle Ages, all natives of Friesland continued to call themselves *Frisones*, with an evident pride in their provincial nationality. Throughout the early Middle Ages, the Frisians had their own national church in Rome, San Michele in Sassia, whose tombstones and monuments still tell the story of Frisian pilgrims.

Nevertheless, inevitable political and economic cooperation among the province fostered a sense of common destiny. By the XIVth century, drainage works and flood protection had made close collaboration between Holland and Utrecht necessary. Wars between the two states never interfered with the combined effort against the forces of nature. This, with common language, common law and common customs convinced the Utrecht chronicler, Johannis de Beka, that the peoples of Holland and Utrecht were essentially one. He dedicated his work jointly to the Count of Holland and the Bishop of Utrecht and in his dedication he wrote:

"From this history you may learn how good it is that you and your peoples live in mutual peace. Your people formed one nation and belonged to one state before Holland was divided into two parts by the Frankish kings. Keep yourselves as well as your people united in indissoluble unity."

In 1339, when Artevelde came to power in Flanders, an agreement was concluded between the towns of this province and those of Brabant, emphasizing the necessity for cooperation, especially in the economic field. Plans were laid for the issue of a common coinage. They came to nought, but the convictions that gave them birth grew stronger and stronger. More and more the western provinces came together. The leading nobles no longer had estates in one of them, but in all. Drawn into the conflict of Anglo-French interests, the coastal provinces refused to be absorbed by either, and this independence found expression in the declaration of neutrality issued by Flanders under Artevelde. This political act was of the greatest interest as it foreshadowed the future policy of the states that were

to arise in the Low Countries. It shows that the modern policy of neutrality was not merely a result of weakness or lassitude, but the outcome of an age-old development. The five provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht became the cradle of a new national unit in western Europe. The final demarcation of this new entity was settled by political events in the coming centuries. Friesland still stood aloof. Since the end of the fourteenth century, Guelders had been closely tied up with the Rhineland, with Cleve, Juliers, and Cologne. For hundreds of years it remained doubtful whether the new nation would have its eastern boundary just outside the town of Utrecht, or on the Weser and Moselle. Fate decreed otherwise and two states, not one, rose out of the new unit.

## CHAPTER V

### Political Unification of the Low Countries

IN the second half of the fourteenth century, the political status of the Low Countries underwent a profound change. Foreign dynasties had replaced the native ones. In Brabant, Duke Wenzel of Bohemia-Luxemburg weakly represented the German Imperial tradition. The strength of his position depended on friendly relations between his brother, the Emperor Charles IV, king of Bohemia and Charles V, the king of France. They died in 1378 and 1380 leaving incompetent successors, and the power of the House of Luxemburg collapsed. Wenzel's nephew, Sigismund, eventually restored it in part, but its position in the Low Countries was lost forever. A new power arose, surging up from Flanders and spreading rapidly over such feudal states in the Low Countries as had once acknowledged allegiance to the German kingdom. Its progress was halted only at the boundaries of the duchy of Guelders. There the Juliers family had temporarily replaced the ancient Wassenberg dynasty, causing the federation of a number of principalities along the banks of the Rhine: of Juliers, Berg and Mark, and later Cleve. This coalition, stretching from the Zuiderzee to the Moselle, tended to become a permanent political unit and seemed destined to counterbalance the new western group of states.

The kernel of the new western power was Flanders and its bulwarks, Holland, Zeeland, and Hainaut. Louis II of Flanders, last prince of the House of Dampierre, left only one child, a daughter, the wealthiest non-royal heiress in Europe. For years the astute Count Louis had maintained neutrality between the warring kings of England and France. The hand of his daughter was his best political asset, and he used it without scruples. When he consented to her marriage with a French prince, it was under conditions that seemed to safeguard forever the territorial integrity and security of his principality. Duke Philip of Burgundy, son of the late King John of France, became the son-in-law of Louis II and later count of Flanders, but his marriage contract stipulated that he renounce his rights as a French prince to become the independent ruler of Flanders. Political, economic, linguistic and cultural factors imposed this demand though the personal sentiments, education, interest and whole nature of Duke Philip rebelled against it. His acceptance of the marriage conditions was an act

of duplicity that could have only tragic consequences. Deliberately, the stipulations to which he and his royal brother, King Charles of France, publicly assented, were annulled beforehand in a secret agreement. Duke Philip wanted both the county of Flanders and his privileges as a prince of the royal blood in France. History forced his successors to choose.

In 1383 Count Louis died. His daughter Margareta and her husband the duke of Burgundy succeeded to the throne. One of the first moves of the new prince was to seek matrimonial alliances for his children which would further extend his power in the Low Countries beyond the boundary that theoretically still separated the French from the German fiefs. By the double marriages of their children, Duke Albrecht of Bavaria-Holland and Duke Philip of Burgundy-Flanders brought their families into the closest of blood relations. These personal ties, the fame to be won, the estates to be gained by participation in the wars of the Royal House of France made the Bavarian counts of Holland and Zeeland, the firm allies of Burgundy. The Romanization of the princely Netherland families progressed rapidly.

Duke Philip's marriage with the "daughter of Flanders" welded close family ties with the duchess of Brabant, wife of Wenzel of Luxemburg. That unfortunate prince died in 1381. The relatives immediately entered into the most unscrupulous competition to gain the good graces of the widowed, childless, but well-endowed old lady, Johanna of Brabant. No service was considered too great to win her favor. When it came to offering men-of-arms or cash, the rich Duke Philip backed by the knighthood of France, the wealth of Flanders, and all the resources of Holland and Zeeland, was in a far better position than the destitute, confused and ill-fated Luxemburgers. For a while a dispute between the helpless old duchess of Brabant, rich in resources but lacking the art to employ them, and the dominant prince of the Rhineland, Duke William of Juliers and Guelders, an ambitious and reckless young man, threatened to involve the French and German kingdoms in war.

Duke William of Juliers and Guelders harassed the Duchess of Brabant until her devoted nephew, the duke of Burgundy, organized the noble enterprise of a French crusade in defense of the bereaved widow. With due regard for the old lady's feelings, he refrained from marching through the plains of Brabant, the natural highway to the Rhine, but led the young king of France and his knights, with their endless train through the rough and well nigh impassable Ardennes. The situation, an anxious one for the dashing duke of Juliers who could not collect sufficient troops to defend himself, was even more anxious for the invaders who wondered how, with the approach of winter, they would be able to withdraw with the wilder-

ness of the Ardennes behind them and the passage through the territories of Duchess Johanna and Duke Philip forbidden. A timely and face saving peace permitted the French to withdraw, and Duke William to vent his military fury on the luckless people of Lithuania.

The main object of the French expedition was achieved. Duchess Johanna was confirmed in her decision to disinherit the relatives of her late husband in favor of her niece, Margareta of Flanders, and her consort. Cession of the duchy of Limburg was the first step she took. By 1400, Burgundian influence was supreme to the Zuiderzee in the north and to the Meuse in the east. Through the possession of Limburg it extended even beyond that river. Duke Philip left Flanders and Burgundy to his eldest son John. His second son, Anthony, inherited Brabant. In Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, William of Bavaria, a cousin of the Burgundians, succeeded his father Albrecht.

The matrimonial policy of the Burgundians was a deliberate attempt to create a "sphere of influence" in the Low Countries. But Duke Philip could never have expected, although he may have hoped, that all these alliances, instead of creating a dynasty of many branches, would result in the merging of the three families into one within the short space of one generation. He may have cynically hoped that death would strike in the right places and thus serve the interests of his direct male heirs, that marriages threatening the unity of his estate would fail, and others would be blessed with the right offspring; but he could hardly have dreamed that this was exactly what was going to happen. When he died the chances for a concentration of all the family estates into one seemed remote. He left three sons, each of whom acquired part of his territories. His son-in-law in Holland had offspring of his own and was still young. Within fifteen years, death aided by the unruly character of the Burgundians themselves had accomplished the task.<sup>14</sup>

Duke Anthony of Brabant perished on the battlefield of Agincourt (1417). In the same battle John's youngest brother, Philip of Nevers met his death. His brother-in-law, William, duke of Bavaria-Holland, was badly wounded in the French civil wars and died of infection. His only child was a daughter, Jacqueline of Bavaria, the heroine of much romantic literature. Duke John eagerly grasped the opportunity. Jacqueline was married into the Burgundian family. If the poor girl had had children, the great hope would have been frustrated. But luckily for the Burgundians, Jacqueline was of a difficult character, a consumptive constitution, constantly pursued by bad luck. Her first husband, heir to the French throne, was poisoned. Widowed at seventeen, she remarried into the Burgundian clan. Her next husband, John of Brabant, was impotent and a moron. She

deserted him. Her third marriage with an English prince was annulled after her new husband had left her. Her fourth matrimonial adventure with a nobleman of Zeeland was in violation of a contract concluded with her powerful cousin, Duke Philip II of Burgundy. She was allowed to keep her husband, but lost her principalities. Three years later (1436) she died at the age of thirty-six. To this extraordinary sequence of events, add that both Duke John of Brabant and his younger brother died childless (1430) and left their lands to their cousin, the same Duke Philip II of Burgundy and Flanders; and the political unification—or better the federation in a single dynasty—of the western coastlands of the Low Countries was complete. The bankruptcy of the count of Namur offered a welcome opportunity to round off the Burgundian possessions. Both the bishoprics of Liège and Utrecht were secured for relatives of Duke Philip II who thus effectively controlled the Low Countries. Burgundy, a buffer state between France and Germany, had come into being.

From this brief sketch of dynastic causes and their political effects, it is obvious that the federation of the Netherland provinces was primarily due to accidental circumstances. If death had struck left instead of right, the future of the Low Countries might have developed quite differently. Accident played so great a part that some historians are satisfied to explain the whole as a trick of Fate. Fate would have it so! When the result was achieved, even the promoters of this curious political growth did not know exactly how to deal with it. The dukes of Burgundy, bent upon creating a buffer state, barely managed to tear themselves loose from the older unit, the kingdom of France, to which they originally belonged. Against their will, political necessity forced them out of the French political community. A troubled European world provided no place for their new state nor its logical policy of expansion. Again Fate it was, through the hand of death and the accidents of marriage and birth, that led Burgundy to its destiny. The dukes could not even devise a *name* for their new principality.

In opposition to this view, some historians point to the common ties already existing among the various provinces long before the arrival of the Burgundians and contend that the unification of the Low Countries was more or less pre-determined by history. If so, which of the provinces were “pre-determined” to be included in this new unit? The linguistic difference between Dutch and French was not of political importance in this period, that between Dutch and German hardly existed. Moreover, was the later separation of the northern and southern Low Countries equally pre-determined, or did the element of accident enter in again through the fortunes of war? <sup>15</sup>

History can never prove that a particular political development was in-



evitable. Attempts to project existing Netherland nationality into the dim past or to assume a broader Netherland-Flemish nationality underlying the political growth of the XVth century must be rejected. To ascribe the whole process to fate and accident would be equally wrong. Returning to our conclusions in the preceding chapter, a definite and growing linguistic and cultural connection existed among the five western provinces. The growth of interdependence is expressed politically in the solidarity between Holland and Utrecht, between Flanders and Brabant. Economically the interests of these two groups may have been opposed, yet both derived their prosperity from the same source, their share in the northeast, southwest trade. Linguistic uniformity grew from the moment the Dutch language became a means of literary expression. All these factors militated for eventual unification in a single state, but did not predetermine it. Unification was political. Once it was achieved, cultural factors could but hasten the development of a common nationality, unless economic antagonism destroyed what political and cultural forces had been building.

The main factor of national unity however, is the will to be united. There is no better example of this than the Swiss Republic. The administration of the Netherland provinces was the concern not of the prince alone, but to an even greater extent of the States Assemblies. A most important factor therefore, was the attitude of the States Assemblies when one province after another passed to the Burgundian dynasty. The acquisition of Brabant, Holland, Zeeland, and Hainaut was realized by the Burgundians only by overcoming strong opposition from forces, partly within and partly without the principalities. But everywhere the majority of the States Assemblies sided with the Burgundians. In Brabant they proved sympathetic to the arguments of Duke Philip I who promised them peace and economic co-operation with Flanders. In Holland the majority of the towns and many nobles supported Duke Philip II in a three years' struggle against their "natural" princess, the ill-fated Jacqueline of Bavaria, who offered heroic if useless resistance at the head of a group of nobles and a peasant army. When the younger branch of the Burgundian dynasty became extinct in Brabant, the States, after ripe deliberation, acknowledged Duke Philip II as their prince, giving him preference over two other candidates. The wish to remain provincially independent was strong. Nowhere was there any conscious desire for unification but, with internal autonomy guaranteed, federation seemed to meet the wishes of the great majority of the representative inhabitants.

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So the provinces of the Low Countries were not merely thrown together by fate. Neither was it merely accidental that federation started from Flan-

ders under strong French influence, although dynastic factors alone led to unification under the Burgundians. It was the constant advance of French influence that helped to make the national individuality of the Low Countries distinct from Imperial Germany. The political evolution corresponded to an internal development that had been in progress for nearly two centuries, helped by the people. That Burgundian success in the west was facilitated by popular consent becomes apparent when we compare it with the sequence of events in the northeastern sector of the Low Countries.

Philip II was the first to intervene in the affairs of Guelders. His intrigues laid a basis for further political penetration carried out with excessive violence by his son, Charles the Bold. Here every advance of the Burgundians was vigorously opposed by the people. Guelders, subdued by the military force of Duke Charles, fought itself free immediately after his death. It took his grandson, the Emperor Charles V, twenty years to force the northeastern districts into submission. Here, resistance was supported by the people. In the west, it was popular support for the Burgundians, especially in the towns, that made such resistance as was offered futile.

By 1433, the five western provinces were united under a Burgundian prince. Ten years later Luxemburg was added to this domain. The tie that now connected these provinces was merely personal allegiance to a common prince. In accepting Burgundian leadership, each province stipulated most clearly that it would remain a perfectly independent administrative unit, and that it would not be obliged to share in any of the duke's political or military undertakings without the consent of its States Assembly. The instances in which one or more of the provinces refused to provide troops and money for ducal campaigns are numerous. All through the reign of the Burgundians and of the Habsburgs who succeeded them, the States never wavered on this point. It was one of the underlying causes of the great Netherland revolt of the late XVIth century against King Philip II of Spain.

However strongly the States might defend their provincial autonomy, the very fact that there was no longer a resident ruler within the boundaries of each province but that all were governed by *one* prince from an arbitrarily chosen capital—Ghent, Brussels or any other place of importance in Burgundy or the Low Countries—created a political situation different from that of former times. The individual provinces were governed through representatives of the prince. The office of *stadhouder*, a literal translation of the French *lieutenant*, came into existence. The *stadhouder* was supposed to take the place of the prince, to exercise all his prerogatives, to administer the "domain," to command the troops, to preside over the States Assembly, to preside over the judiciary, and to enforce whatever other rights the

prince might have. For obvious reasons, the prince was reluctant to place such power in the hands of one man, a powerful noble who usually had considerable resources and following of his own, and might be tempted to revolt against his overlord. With the rather loose Burgundian federation, such a revolt might have been disastrous. Consequently, the dukes tried to build a central administration with branches in the provinces.

The administrative organization of the Burgundian federative state—for it would be incorrect to speak of “Burgundy” or a “Burgundian” or even “Netherland” state—was modeled on that of France. This was natural. The Burgundians never forgot that they were princes of the Royal House of France. John, Philip II, and Charles the Bold fought the kings of France mainly to vindicate the place in French politics they believed to be theirs. Through the Burgundians, a number of French conceptions and institutions seeped into the political organization of the Low Countries, causing tensions which lasted until the end of the XVIth century and were then among the underlying causes of the Great Revolt. The territorial princes of the XIVth century had governed with the assistance of privy councilors and, when need arose, enlarged their council by adding prominent men of their country. The enlarged Council became the States Assembly and an institution in its own right. The privy council, composed of a few men who happened to have the confidence of the prince, remained a vague institution without clearly defined functions. Even so, it played a real and very useful part in provincial administration. The Burgundian dukes, who followed the same system, could not take the combined provincial councils with them wherever they went, nor could they do without a privy council in matters for which they were personally responsible. The result was a duplication of councils, one going with the prince and attending to inter-provincial and personal affairs, the others staying within each of the respective territories and attending to local affairs. The consequence was the subordination of the latter to the former and now that a hierarchy was introduced, the necessity of defining the functions of each of them. This development completed the constitutional organization of the principalities. In each province there was, besides the States Assembly representing the influential social groups, the *Hof* (which literally translated means the “Court”) or the *Raad* (the Council) representing the authority of the prince.

Above these councils, the “Great Council” officiated with the duke in the central administration. At its head was the chancellor, virtually the duke’s Prime Minister. Soon Duke Philip found it impossible to take his councilors, men no longer in the prime of life, with him wherever his restless nature prompted him to go. He dispensed with the long train of noble-

men, officials, priests and lawyers with their servants, horses, wagons, and mules bearing heavy cases of books and legal documents, and took with him only a few of his most trusted advisors for the immediate discussion of matters of high policy. Thus he restricted the movements of the Council. To part of it, with special judicial functions, he assigned a residence in Malines. Thus the "Grand Council" also became a fixed administrative organization.

The institution of these councils was not so important as the spirit behind the innovation. From now on the administration of the provinces became impersonal. This fostered the idea that the territories had an individuality of their own, apart from the person of their ruler. The princely "domain" had become a state, though still a provincial state. Of necessity the administration came into the hands of professional administrators, men trained in legal affairs. This meant study of Canon and Roman law, and Roman law had never been in force in the Low Countries. No other laws than those based on national customs and derived from old Germanic legal principles were admitted in the courts. But Roman law was widely studied. For a time the remote university of Bologna was the main center of legal studies but in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, Paris, Orleans, and Angers attracted scholars from the Low Countries. These lawyers sought to permeate the higher courts of justice and the higher organs of administration with their legal conceptions. In matters of government this would have meant a complete revolution of the relationship between prince and subjects. In matters of justice it would have meant that the whole judiciary organization and the handling of all legal matters would have to be turned over to lawyers with a knowledge of Roman law. But there is far from theory to practice. The subsequent rules of the "Hof van Holland," when acting as high court of justice, emphatically required that justice should be rendered according to customary law. Only in the XVIIIth century was Roman law officially introduced as an alternative authority, to be used when customary law provided no rule that could be applied. In the other Netherland provinces, the same thing took place. Roman law was cited, was consulted in difficult cases by trained lawyers, but was never enforced.

The towns, confronted with this new central authority and feeling the necessity of a paid expert in their local administration began to appoint pensionaries, i.e., salaried officials. This provided further opportunities for the increasing number of graduates from law schools, although in such offices they had to apply their legal training in defense of the customs and freedoms which were under sharp attack from their colleagues in the provincial government. In 1477 the States of Holland began to discuss the appointment of a permanent attorney for their own affairs, a *landsad-*

*voķaat*. This did not take place until 1525 when the first official of this rank, the predecessor of the grand pensionaries of the seventeenth century, was appointed.

From the foregoing it will be seen that a permanent if latent conflict existed between the legal experts employed by the Burgundian administration and the representative groups of the people. The constant pressure of the lawyers who, in their contempt for native judicial and legal forms and in their admiration for Roman law, tried to impose foreign legal conceptions on a self-willed people, created permanent tensions. Local outbursts took place, for instance in the Dutch speaking section of the bishopric of Liège. Here the peasants rose in 1461 and, taking a heavy club for their emblem, hunted down and killed all lawyers of the district, accusing them of sucking the life blood of the people through foreign laws that delayed justice.

Popular opposition to the Burgundian reforms was stronger than the attempted reorganization of the judiciary. During the whole of the XVth century, a conflict raged over the judicial authority of the Great Council. This increased after Duke Charles divided the Council into two sections and, in 1473, established one of them in Malines as his "Parliament." In name and function it was but an imitation of the Parliament of Paris, with the difference that the Malines Parliament was created by the sole will of the prince and thus had no tradition behind it that could make it a legal curb on the will of the ruling monarch. Of necessity, the language of the Parliament was either Latin or French, and an order was issued by Charles the Bold to the provincial courts that all documents written in Dutch should be translated into one or the other of the official languages. Procedure would then follow "written law," which often if not always meant Roman law. Centralization of the judiciary as in France, inevitably led to the introduction of this foreign form of law which was never accepted by the people. The provincial States Assemblies violently resented the interference of an inter-provincial Court of Justice in their affairs and compelled its abolition after the death of Charles. Resentment proved so strong and lasting that as late as 1673 the rural districts of Waterland in Holland imposed a fine of two pounds on anyone who "used foreign or obscure terms of law without translating them into plain Dutch," which made the use of the Justinian code rather expensive.

Federation, though not accepted by all and violently resented in judicial matters, was nevertheless favorably received by large sections of the population and especially by the towns that were to play an increasingly important role in the future. With a view of saving time and money, Duke Philip II called the States Assemblies of his territories together for joint

sessions. Instead of traveling from province to province to obtain the consent of his subjects to special taxes, he had them convene at a generally accessible place. The first of these meetings was held in 1463 at Bruges. This was not without precedent for the counts of Holland of the House of Avesnes had done the same, but the Burgundians gave these joint sessions a new significance. Here again rivalry between the Burgundian Valois and the reigning French branch of that family forms the background. The king of France used to summon his nobles, clergy and towns to joint assemblies, and the Burgundians just could not bear to be without a similar institution. But in the French States General, the three social groups formed horizontal units, whereas in those of the Low Countries, the six provinces formed six vertical units. No insinuating phrases used by the ducal chancery in summoning "clergy, nobles, and towns" could induce the provincial assemblies to renounce their individuality in favor of a general reclassification. Thus in the Low Countries, the assembly of the States General remained a mere formality. Power of decision lay with the individual provincial assemblies alone. Usually the demands of the duke were presented to the general meeting, and actual negotiations afterwards conducted with the individual States Assemblies in their respective provinces. Geographic circumstances and tradition limited the effects of the innovation, even in this mitigated form. The duke could hardly summon the representatives of *all* his territories, those in eastern France—the duchy and *Franche Comté* of Burgundy—and those of the Low Countries. Only the five provinces of the western coast, with Namur as an unimportant sixth member, conformed to Duke Philip's wish for outward unity, though reserving their individual rights. Here geographic, cultural and historical considerations, assisted the innovation. Here provincial representatives, accustomed to inter-provincial organization, showed willingness to adapt the practice to their own purposes, by maintaining correspondence on matters of general interest. An inner ring of more closely related provinces was thus discernible within the Burgundian union. The greater Burgundian combination apparently did not respond to any normal political growth, and a more national limited federation did not suit the political views of the Burgundian rulers. This was the great weakness of the new state. If the Burgundian dukes had concentrated their efforts on the stabilization of their power in the Low Countries, they might have succeeded better in their policy of state building, though on a limited scale. But their dynastic tradition, their political conceptions, and the implacable opposition of their enemies prevented this. Indeed, the dukes of Burgundy occupied a most difficult position in Europe because of their ill-defined legal status.

Philip I, the founder of the dynasty, never considered himself anything

but a French prince. Duke John was the first to separate himself from the French national policy towards England. Beyond that, he played a part as chief of a faction in the French civil wars. Thrown into an alliance with England by his father's assassination, Duke Philip II was the first to oppose France as if she were a foreign power. Nevertheless, he maintained the fiction that he was not fighting his lawful king but a usurper to the throne. Until his death, he was proud of his position as a prince of the Royal House of France. It was his dream to create a second France, between the Channel, the Swiss mountains, and the Rhine. He dreamed of becoming its king, and acquiring equal rank with the kings of France. His institutions were imitations of those of France. The refined civilization of his court was modeled after the French example. The language of the court was French. He had his panegyrists in the writers of Burgundian history, in Georges Chastellain and in Olivier de la Marche. His courtiers called him the "Grand Duke of the Occident." Not to be outdone by the kings of England who had founded the "Order of the Garter," he created the "Order of the Golden Fleece," which was to be a brotherhood of nobles who indissolubly linked their fate to that of the House of Burgundy. He contemplated a Crusade against the Turks, assuming a role the kings of France had neglected to fill since the death of Louis IX.

This dream of building a new France in non-French territory rendered the whole Burgundian foundation vague and unreal. The Burgundian dukes themselves had no clear conception of their aims. They did not plan a state with well-chosen geographic boundaries, they merely grasped at every opportunity to extend their domain. Their personalities alone decided whether their policy of expansion would be carried out with prudence and due regard to geographical and political considerations. Duke Philip II, always cautious beneath an outward display of passion, advanced step by step and allowed the fruits of his policy to ripen before he picked them.

Cautious in his policy of expansion, Philip was not less prudent in his endeavors to safeguard his hastily and loosely built political structure. He knew that, even if he succeeded in uniting the provinces into one state, his work would lack stability unless it was confirmed and legalized by the proper authorities. This was the weakness of his position. No Emperor was strong enough to force the French Burgundians from the soil of the Empire, but only the Emperor could legally confirm their power. Duke Philip sought such confirmation. He was willing to make great concessions and to leave his French fiefs, like Flanders, outside the political unity he wished to constitute as a kingdom under the sovereignty of Germany. On the other hand, and this demand is most significant, he wanted his new kingdom to

include the overlordship of numerous feudal states in western Germany—Guelders, Cleve, Berg, Mark, and Lorraine, for instance. This was the first attempt to determine an eastern boundary for the developing Flemish-Hollandish state, and it betrayed the ambitions of the new power. Frederick of Habsburg, then ruling Emperor, knew Philip's anxiety to secure a legalization of his position and to it he opposed a cautious policy of evasion. Duke Philip, too good a tactician to show impatience, avoided pressing the issue. His state remained nameless. "My lands over here" was all his chancery could call his possessions in the Low Countries.

Philip's son, Charles, rash and reckless, was impatient to secure a royal title and equal rank with the kings of the west. With brutal strokes of his sword, he sought to cut down the barriers separating his lands "over here" from those "over there" in the duchy of Burgundy. He failed and in 1477 died insane on the battlefield of Nancy. His frantic efforts to create an independent buffer-state brought out all the weaknesses of his position. He was forced to give up all pretense of being a French prince of the Royal House. The new king of France, the wily Louis XI, bent upon centralizing his monarchy, left Charles no choice. From now on, vassalage was to mean obedience, and disobedience to the king was to be treason to France. The people did not see things in that light; and the nobility definitely refused to accept such an interpretation of sovereignty, objecting to this novel conception because of their ancient traditions as semi-independent vassals. The kings of France finally prevailed although it took them two hundred and fifty years and a series of energetic rulers from Louis XI to Richelieu to drive the point home to the very last of the recalcitrants.

Charles of Burgundy was the first and most tragic of the victims of the new political theory. His bitterness at being outcast from France is reflected by his chroniclers, and in his wild, immoderate actions. Whenever his political schemes were opposed by the king of France or by French intrigues, he lost all sense of moderation. No longer recognized as a prince of the House of Valois, Charles seeking to repudiate what he could no longer call his own, resorted to the strangest devices. Being no longer a "Frenchman," he sought another nationality. Strangely enough he adopted the denomination "Portuguese," from the nationality of his mother, to make it clear to the world that he was independent of France, England, and Germany. Though fighting to create a sovereign state of his own, Charles evidently could not think of that state as a separate national entity. At the time of his death the position of the Burgundian princes was still as vague as when they began their momentous career.

With Charles's death, the Burgundian state seemed doomed to collapse. It was not yet legally constituted, and King Louis of France sought to



make the most of his opportunity. The duke's only daughter, Mary of Burgundy, had to face a host of enemies. Threatened by a French invading army, she saw her subjects rise against her authority in resentment of her father's arbitrary proceedings. Yet the Burgundian creation survived. The home of the dynasty, the duchy of Burgundy, was lost. In the Low Countries, however, the dukes had given political form to existing, but vague tendencies, and there they survived.

They had created a dynastic bond among the provinces, and through their court and administration had fostered French civilization all over the Low Countries. They had sought to make their territory independent of France and Germany by giving it a high court of justice, a standing among European principalities, and in 1425 had even made it self-supporting in the field of learning by founding the university of Louvain. They had fostered the growth of an inter-provincial aristocracy by lifting a number of families—the Nassaus of Breda, the Croys and Lalaings from Hainaut, the Bergens from Brabant, the Egmonts from Holland, the Ravesteins from Guelders, and many others—above their former rank and position, while adding to the nobility their own numerous illegitimate offspring. They had developed a financial policy which has never been adequately studied but is remarkable for its attempts to establish a uniform currency throughout the provinces. All this, significant as it is, did not suffice to offset the reaction that followed the severe government of Duke Charles.

It was primarily the will of the leading classes, of the representative States Assemblies, that kept the Low Countries together. The individual provincial assemblies sought new charters to guarantee their complete regional independence; at the same time they sought a common charter for the "Generality" of all the provinces. They asked explicitly that the States General be allowed to convene whenever it pleased them, without being summoned by the prince. They further demanded that appointments to the Grand Council be brought under their control and a definite number of its members be taken from each province. They no longer objected to the central government but sought to make it their own. The "domain" of the princes had developed into a federation of autonomous provinces. Thus the defeat of 1477, by reducing the domains of Burgundy, and momentarily checking the aspirations of its rulers, contributed to its inner stability. The marriage of the young Duchess Mary to Maximilian of Austria, son of the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire finally provided the long desired legalization of its status.

Important as was the political evolution of the XVth century, the social evolution was far more so. This century brought an efflorescence of Netherland civilization, this time with characteristics of its own, which inaugu-

rated the great economic development that was to give affluence and world power to the Netherlands. In this social evolution we discern the opposing tendencies of north and south that a century later, contributed to the splitting up of the Low Countries into northern and southern sections. Cultural life remained centered in the provinces of Flanders and Brabant. The northern provinces, Holland and Utrecht, followed in the wake of their more advanced southern neighbors, with one remarkable exception.

In Flanders and Brabant, the art of painting reached a level so high that it became a permanent part of the great European cultural inheritance. The work of the brothers Van Eyck suddenly revealed the vigorous growth of artistic traditions barely perceptible in the Low Countries a few decades before. Their disciples and successors, coming from all parts of the country, were automatically drawn to the bustling centers of life in Brussels, Antwerp, and Bruges, where princely protection and the patronage of wealthy merchant families enabled them to earn a handsome living. Here, too, they found opportunities for an exchange of ideas with Italian artists from which both parties profited. In their desire to be true, to represent the world as they saw it, their ideas as they conceived them, their love of detail that, however flimsy, nevertheless reflect the true atmosphere of the scene, these painters created the tradition of the really native, wholly and indubitably Netherland art, the great, unquestionably unique contribution of the Netherlands to the civilization of mankind. In the XVth century, this art flourished in the southern provinces, but was never their exclusive product. From the different corners of the Low Countries painters flocked to the centers of cultural life in Flanders and Brabant, but although individual masters left the more backward provinces, artistic potentialities remained. As circumstances changed, art triumphed wherever social conditions gave it a chance. The Burgundians fostered this glorious development but they did not create or determine it. It was the product of a popular, not a princely civilization.

The same was true in music. The Burgundian court with its international relations provided an excellent medium for Netherland musicians and composers. In the XVIth century their fame was at its peak. Here too, the Burgundian court merely drew on the artistic talents of the people. The great masters, Johannes Okeghem and Jacob Obrecht, built their polyphonic music on folk tunes. These songs, in their pure beauty and the tender melancholy of their melodies are perhaps the most perfect expression of Netherland spiritual life of the XVth century. The dukes of Burgundy gained more glory from Netherland arts than they could contribute to the civilization of the country. Cultural life did not fluctuate according

to the degree of interest shown by various princes as in some cities in Italy, and it was never concentrated in one single town.

The folk songs were naturally in the vernacular, and the few important literary products of this eventful period were also written in Dutch. That language, the *thiois* or *dietsch*, was looked upon by the courtiers as an "uncouth tongue." As Chastellain said, "the peasants' talk," fit only for the "people of the pastures, the ignorants, rough of mouth and palate, of poor appearance, as suits the nature of the land."<sup>16</sup> Nothing shows more clearly the cleavage between the court and the people, between the superficial refined life of the Burgundians and the real civilization of their peoples, as revealed in their folk songs, their painting and their dramatic literature.

The northeastern provinces, still outside the orbit of Burgundian influence and less stimulated by direct contact with the non-Germanic world of western Europe, seemed backward in comparison with rural Holland. Nevertheless, they too contributed to the cultural life of the Low Countries, for it was in the towns of IJssel that there originated the religious movement known as the *Devotio Moderna*. It is not within the scope of this work to evaluate the significance of this movement in late medieval religious life. It produced one of the most widely read books ever written, the *Imitatio Christi* which was compiled, composed or arranged, as scholars will have it, by Thomas à Kempis. Thomas, born at Kempen in the Rhineland, then part of the duchy of Guelders, lived and worked in the monastery of Mount St. Agnes near Zwolle from 1399 until 1417. His compilation, written by one intimately acquainted, either personally or through their works, with all the prominent leaders of the *Devotio*, represents the true tradition of his community and the spiritual inheritance of its founder, Geert Groote. Groote belongs to the XIVth century like his teacher, the great mystic, John Ruysbroeck of Groenendaal near Brussels. His personality was wholly medieval, the best the Middle Ages had to give. His work, however, bore fruit only after his death in 1384. Thanks to the open-mindedness of Groote and his disciples, their work became a great force in the cultural life of the XVth century. It coincided with a growing desire for knowledge among the upper classes and in their willingness to serve their people and with clear insight into practical needs, the followers of Groote showed what the critical, soberminded, burgher-type of Lowlander could achieve when moved by high ideals.<sup>17</sup>

It is difficult to gauge the effect of their work on religious life. Perchance intensification of religious life, especially among the burgher class, and an emphasis on the inner understanding of Christian ideals at a time when often an appalling disparity existed between the outward form of ecclesias-

tical institutions and their inner meaning, contributed to individual criticism of the Church and its practices. The burgher class eagerly grasped this opportunity for greater independence, though certainly with no deliberate intension of opposing the established Church. In this way the movement of the *Devotio Moderna* may have helped unintentionally to prepare the way for the Reformation, especially as the prestige of the Church suffered in the same period from the Great Schism. In the Netherlands the hierarchy was further degraded by the shameless way the Burgundians used the episcopal dignity for their political ends.

For princes of the Church installed by Burgundian armies and yet supposed to be their spiritual rulers, the people could have little respect. Real religious movements avoided the bishop's palace and the cathedral. In the revival of spiritual life, the "Brethren of the Common Life" (the loose religious association into which many of the adherents of the *Devotio Moderna* had been organized) took a prominent part, but it was by no means confined to Groote's followers. Identical efforts were made by some of the older religious orders, especially the Franciscans. The eloquence of their great preacher, Johannes Brugman, whose sermons rivaled in dramatic effect those of his better-known contemporaries in Italy, is proverbial in the Netherlands to this day. A similar religious renewal took place among the Dominicans and Cistercians. The latter in their Frisian monastery of Aduard, provided a place of rest for the renowned Wessel Gansfoort, one of the earliest Netherland Humanists and a theologian considered by Martin Luther as one of his precursors. It is impossible to pass judgment in general terms on spiritual conditions prevailing in Netherland monasteries and convents of the XVth century. Some were deteriorating, others were flourishing and striving to attain Christian ideals. In some cases the revival of idealism lasted for half a century; in others a relapse into indifference followed the death of a great leader. Erasmus, whose witty and mordant criticism was the fruit of resentment, led later generations to condemn institutions that ought to be judged according to their individual merit.

The same is true of the work of the "Brethren of the Common Life." They also were branded by Erasmus as spirits of darkness, notwithstanding their unceasing labor for the improvement of education. Recent historical works point out that the significance of the Brethren and their work in the revival of learning in northwestern Europe has been greatly overestimated. It is true that originally the Brethren did not teach, that only gradually they took up teaching and founded schools, that their institutions were not progressive and only became so under the influence of Humanism. Nevertheless, the Brethren assumed the care of pupils (previously

one of the most neglected groups of society) boarded them and supervised their morals. This could not be without influence upon the educational system in general. Schools patronized, if not run by the Brethren, saw their attendance increase four- or fivefold. The fame of the schools of Deventer and Zwolle was intimately connected with the work of the *Devotio Moderna*.

It is well established that these schools did not originally favor the revival of classical learning and did not share the appreciation of literary form so characteristic of the age. Nevertheless, they later became foremost among institutions spreading the new ideas; and among the friends and pupils of the Brethren many like Roelofsen (Agricola), Gansfoort, Hegius, and Erasmus himself, were the standard bearers of Humanism. The devotion to learning fostered in their schools necessarily resulted in excellence in the new studies. The evolution of education from the XVth to the XVIth century in the Netherlands is typical. Thoroughness of elementary and secondary instruction was and still is, the pride of Dutch education. Even Erasmus, for all his disparagement of his native land, its "barbaric" customs, its monasteries and schools under the control of the Brethren, acknowledges that a high standard of public education existed among the Netherlands, though few of them attained the highest rank in the world of learning. This thoroughness was the result of the combined influences of the XVth century spiritual and XVIth century literary revivals.

The *Devotio Moderna* and the institutions that emanated from it, spread east and southeast from the IJssel towns. Thus the cultural contacts between the eastern Netherlands of today and western Germany—Westphalia and the lower Rhineland—became closer than ever. Their institutions had branches along the Rhine to Alsace, and through the Low German plains to Rostock and even Prussia. They also penetrated into Holland and northern Brabant; but in the southern Low Countries they touched only the most prominent places, big trading centers like Antwerp. In fact, this XVth century movement foreshadowed a development that was to come early in the XVIth: the formation of a Low German cultural unity, independent of the western Lowland unity and of the High German one of Franconia, the middle Elbe and the South. New forces were moving, along the coast of the North Sea, as well as in the lowlands of Germany, and in the mountainous area of the South. The spheres of influence around these centers overlapped. The future was to decide which influence would survive and where the boundaries between them would be drawn.

The rapid spread of knowledge among the middle classes was conditioned by their increasing wealth. The prosperity of the towns had grown

with expanding trade and industry, and had reached a level where at least a certain luxury was permitted. People outside the Church had means to live at leisure and thus devote their time to artistic and spiritual matters. Nowhere in the northern Netherlands did the merchant class equal the prosperity of the bankers of Bruges, the traders of Luebeck and of Antwerp. The general level of welfare was rapidly rising, however; with it further characteristics of Netherland society became apparent.

Around 1377, the Hanseatic League reached the peak of its power. It had humiliated the king of Denmark and Norway, and dictated stringent terms of peace. More and more Luebeck dominated the League, with close support from Hamburg and the "Wendish" towns. Competitors were driven out of business. Frisian coastal shipping had been eliminated since the XIIIth century, and Holland's trade was closely watched by the mercantile lords of the Elbe and Trave. As long as the sea captains from Holland sailed for Hanseatic merchants, they were allowed to visit the ports of the Baltic. On the point of Skonen they might have their "fitten," reserved sites where they pitched their tents during the summer fair and the season of herring fishing. They were also allowed to carry less valuable merchandise along the all-sea trade route, around Jutland to the Baltic towns. But the main part of the east-west trade, the handling of valuable merchandise like Flemish cloth and Russian furs, was strictly reserved to the Hanseatic merchants who followed the overland route from Hamburg to Luebeck. This was shorter and safer than the route around Jutland, but more expensive for it involved excise taxes and more middlemen.

It was certain that once the Hollanders were acquainted with the Baltic trade routes, they would try to cut out the Hanseatic intermediaries and buy direct from Polish and Russian producers. The Luebeck merchants were quick to realize this. Shortly after 1400, they saw that it would require force to prevent the merchants from Holland trading with Russian and Polish wheat producers. The Hollanders cleverly exploited the growing rift between the Wendish and Baltic towns in the League, and the resentment of the Baltic princes, the kings of Denmark, the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order, and the Russians against the economic tutelage of Luebeck and its allies. The struggle was between vested interests and economic upstarts. Flanders, interested in maintaining itself as the great textile center sided with the Hansa. The Prussian and Livland towns rallied half-heartedly around Luebeck when they realized that the new competition might endanger their own positions as well as that of Luebeck's. The Hollanders were not easily baffled. Avoiding the Estonian and the Livland port, they sought to base their trade on Åbo in Finland. Evidence of this "evil" intent was discovered in the fact that some of them were study-

ing Russian. They deserted the fairs of Skonen and began to make their own connections along the shores of the Baltic. Within half a century the friendship that united Amsterdam and the Hansa when they joined hands in 1370 to make war on Denmark-Norway, changed into open hostility.

Luebeck decided upon a policy of repression. It enacted a series of Hansa decrees excluding Hollanders from trade with the interior of Germany. In 1417, strict regulations were made for the control of all trade by foreigners—i.e., non-members of the Hansa. In the same year, the import of low-quality Leiden cloth, with which the Hollanders competed against expensive Flemish woollen goods, was stopped. All this did not daunt the intruders. Early in the XVth century, we find ships from Holland selling herring and salt from the Bay of Biscay to Novgorod, but they could no longer trade with the interior of Germany. In the development of the Low Countries, these prohibitive measures, cutting off the western coastlands from the interior economically, were naturally an important factor. The Hollanders, then and there, were branded as foreigners by the same northern Germans with whom they had been so closely associated in past centuries.

Luebeck was not satisfied with excluding Hollanders from the German markets. In 1426, their rivals entered into what Luebeck considered an inadmissible combination with Denmark, always restive under Hanseatic supervision. Luebeck responded with a draconic decree: the closing of the Sund to all non-Hanseatic ships. In a few years, war flared. The struggle for the *Dominium Maris Baltici*, control over the Baltic sea, had begun. It was to last four hundred years, to quiet down in the nineteenth century, and to be renewed in our own time. As all discontented elements tended to side with Holland, the war from 1430 to 1441 cracked the Hanseatic system. The conflict took the form of a series of piratical raids. The two opponents inflicted considerable damage upon each other, but could not bring about a decision. The Hansa then resorted to the familiar twentieth-century expedient of economic sanctions. By prohibiting all trade between members of the League and the Hollanders, they sought to starve their enemies into submission and actually did cause endless misery through famine and unemployment in the coastal villages and small towns of Holland. Although the sea captains of Holland drove Hanseatic shipping from the North Sea, the financial wounds they inflicted on the rich merchants of Luebeck were far less fatal than the dearth and starvation caused in Holland by the Hanseatic blockade.

This war was fought privately by the ship captains and sailors of Holland. Duke Philip of Burgundy, their otherwise highly respected lord, sought vainly to intervene in a conflict that disturbed his political com-

binations. The sea-farers and townspeople disregarded his requests and threats, just as a few years before they had ignored his declaration of war against England and had continued to trade with their duke's enemy despite his angry protests. Not Burgundy but Denmark settled the conflict. King Eric of Denmark, who owed his throne to the Hanseatics, turned against his overweening protectors and with his help, the Hollanders, in a last desperate effort carried the war into the estuaries of the Weser and Elbe, even into the Sund itself to decide the issue. Their victory was by no means decisive—hardly a victory at all in the military or political sense; but it raised the morale of the townspeople of Holland whose ships had managed to hold their own against the powerful Hansa. Under the stipulations of the peace treaty, the ships of Holland were readmitted to the Baltic. After a short breathing spell, they started upon the marvelous expansion of their trade which within half a century made them the equals and finally the superiors of the Hanseatics. In 1476, 168 Luebeck ships visited the port of Danzig, as against 156 from Holland. Twenty years later, the merchantmen from Holland outnumbered those of the Hansea in the same port.

Nothing contributed more to the prosperity of the Hollanders than the growth of their fishing industry. For some unknown cause, the herring changed their yearly migrations from the narrows between the North Sea and the Baltic to the waters east of England and on the Doggerbank. The ship owners of Holland exploited this favorable event to the full and obtained a virtual monopoly of the North Sea fisheries. The handling of the catch required large quantities of salt, which was brought to Holland on her own ships from the Bay of Biscay and later from Portugal. By the second half of the XVth century, the Low Countries has thus become a maritime and commercial power.

Bruges had lost its importance as a seaport, but for a long time remained the principal money-market of Northern Europe. Trade had shifted to Antwerp, now the greatest port north of the Alps. Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian ships brought merchandise to be exchanged for the products of the North. English wool manufacturers, freed from their industrial dependence on Flanders by Flemish weavers who brought their art to England, made the same town their headquarters. Middelburg, favorably situated at the entrance of the Scheldt, had its share of this prosperity but also took an active part in shipping. More to the north, the maritime and fishing interests of Holland, now free to compete with the Hanseatics, spread their commerce, fan-like, along the Atlantic coasts. The Portuguese discovered the shores of Africa and the Atlantic islands, but Flemish capital and the sailors of Holland had their share in this success. When the Azores were discovered and their colonization decided upon, Flemings provided



the money and the men. The old familiar Dutch name of van der Haaghen, one of the entrepreneurs, long persisted in the islands in its Portuguese version of Guihermo da Silveira; and the islands themselves are marked on XVIth century maps as the "Flemish Islands."

The XVth century was the period in which Europe became nationally conscious. In Italy, split up into many petty states, a desire for political unity or at least cooperation was a reaction to foreign aggression. "To drive the foreigners from our native soil" became a slogan in the Italian wars around 1500. In France, the English invasion of the early XVth century was repelled by the spiritual and military heroism of Joan of Arc. Even in the hopelessly divided Empire, German feeling tended to unite under the shock of foreign penetration, military and ecclesiastical. The onslaught of Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy against the German cities on the Rhine, provoked a general reaction to the East. In both France and Germany, attempts were made to set up "national" churches as quasi-autonomous branches of the Roman Catholic Church.

The old tribal sentiments which had prompted earlier chroniclers to extol the feats of their own people and to deride the "cowardice" of foreigners, now developed into a new national consciousness, as yet vague and undetermined, that borrowed its terminology from the classics. The Italians dwelt upon the glory and the glamor of ancient Rome to inspire the hopelessly torn Italy of their own time. The French began to see themselves the *Galli* in recollection of Gauls and boundaries on Pyrenees and Rhine described by Caesar. The rediscovery of the works of Tacitus in the middle of the XVth century lent glory to the previously less esteemed name of *Germani*. North of the Alps, however, there remained a certain incongruity between the precision of classic terminology and the vagueness of national political formulations. England alone had the advantage of natural boundaries. There the political superstructure corresponded to the national entity. In other countries they were but distantly related.

What place did the Low Countries take in this new Latinized political geography? In politics, they were officially partly *Galli*, partly *Germani*. Erasmus used these expressions in one of his letters. He wrote that geographically not only Flanders but also Holland tended more towards France than towards Germany. It was the cultural dependence of Holland on France that made him say so. Caesar, in his *De Bello Gallico*, had provided an alternative in the name *Belgae* for a people he described as part Germanic and part Gallic. His *Belgica* extended from the lower Seine to the Rhine. Most of this territory had retained its name under Roman administration as the province of *Belgica prima*. The dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church corresponded to the *civitates* of the Roman ad-

ministration, and the term *Belgica* had survived as the designation of the Archdiocese of Rheims, to which Flanders, Hainaut, and most of Brabant belonged. Forgotten in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries, the name reappeared in a Hainaut chronicle of the XIVth century. Its geographical meaning was vague until the Low Countries began to form a political unit of their own. Then it came into use as the Latin term for their inhabitants. Because Latin was familiar only to the more cultivated world, *Belgae*, *Belgica*, and *Belgium* were terms applied *post-factum* to political formations. They did not indicate national or even well-determined geographic areas distinct from political considerations.

The same was true of the term *Batavi*. Tacitus' narrative had unexpectedly revealed the military glory of the ancient inhabitants of the land between Meuse and Rhine. Humanists, filled with pride when reading of the war-like exploits of Civilis, sought to establish a direct historical connection between the Low Countries of their own time and the Batavi. Some claimed them as the ancestors of the people of Holland; others, as the ancestors of the people of Guelders. This provincial patriotism caused an interesting archaeological discussion of the classic texts referring to the Batavi, the first critical interpretation of ancient Netherland history. The Batavi, according to Tacitus and other historians, belonged to the Germani. And so Erasmus was claimed as a compatriot by his German colleagues, and the great humanist taxed all his ingenuity to avoid acquiescence. Though otherwise he followed the ancient adage, *Ubi bene ibi patria*, and referred to England, France, and Germany as his fatherland whenever he happened to feel at home in any one of those countries, he definitely refused to see his native land, which was to him a distinct part of Western Europe, included in Germany.

The High Germans themselves were among the first ones to see the Low Countries as an individual entity in the European world. The term *Nederland*, originally applied to the whole area of the Low German plain, was more and more identified with the *Dietsch*-speaking part of the Burgundian monarchy. The differentiation between the *Dietsch* of the coastlands and the *Overlandish* of the eastern plains became more pronounced. *Dietsch* and High German were then already different languages, too far apart for the one to be commonly understood by the speakers of the other. An envoy from the Elector of Saxonia to Philip of Burgundy, in the middle of the XVth century, needed an interpreter to be understood by Flemings. The Hanseatics spoke of the towns of *Netherland*, opposing them to those of Nether Germany. When Archduke Maximilian of Austria went to Flanders to marry Mary of Burgundy, it was according to the words of his panegyrist, a voyage into *Niderland*. Ten years later, in 1497,

the French version of the names appeared in a significant form when Maximilian was recognized as *le mambour de tous les Pays Bas*, the protector of all the Low Countries. The geographic term had gained political and national significance. The poets of the Burgundian court, as well as their French opponents, styled Duke Charles the Bold "the Lion Rampant of the Lowlands adjoining Germany." The "Lion Rampant" was an apt name for a prince all of whose provinces, united under Burgundian rule, carried the lion rampant in the coats of arms—black on gold for Flanders, gold on black for Brabant, red on gold for Holland.

Cultural influence from France, economic antagonism to the Hansa, political and linguistic cleavage from High Germany, political hostility to the French kings, vigorous cultural and economic developments at home had united to create the core of a new nation, to which the hybrid Burgundian state gave inadequate political expression. It found a purer interpretation in the endeavors of the provincial States Assemblies, after the death of Duke Charles, to reorganize his monarchy along popular, federative lines. The XVIth century was to fulfill the promise of the two preceding centuries.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Great Crisis of the Sixteenth Century

MARY OF BURGUNDY was only nineteen when her father, Duke Charles, fell in the battle of Nancy. Helpless and alone, she faced the joint threat of French invasion and of internal revolution. Although forced to relinquish the arbitrary authority her father had assumed, and mortally insulted by the people of Flanders who murdered her most trusted councilors before her eyes, she remained the sole arbiter of the future of the Low Countries. By her marriage, the inheritance of the extinct Valois-Burgundian dynasty must pass into the hands of one or other of the ruling families of Europe. King Louis XI of France coveted her lands for his seven-year-old boy, the future Charles VIII. The duke of Guelders, a prisoner of the Burgundians in 1477, nourished hopes of exchanging his cell for the palace of the young duchess. King Edward IV pondered a matrimonial alliance between the Low Countries and England. Philip of Cleve, the playmate of Mary in her childhood, dreamed of life-long companionship and joint rule with the friend of his youth. Frederick of Habsburg, the third Emperor of that name, who twice had received the pledge of Duke Charles for the marriage of Archduke Maximilian with the heiress of Burgundy, had not given up hope of securing her glorious inheritance for his dynasty. Mary, desirous of personal as well as political support and unwilling to seek an agreement with France, turned indeed to the Habsburgs for protection.<sup>18</sup>

Maximilian, a romantic nature, lacked the strength of character to carry through the schemes his fertile imagination conceived. As a dreamer he was not unlike his father-in-law, Duke Charles, but although his ambitions were greater he was far more aware of his limitations and the extent of his power. He looked upon the Low Countries not as the center of his political fortunes but only as one of several pawns in a wider European game. As archduke of Austria and, later, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as prince of the Lowlands, his attention was constantly diverted from one corner of Europe to another, from Brittany to Hungary, and from England to Italy. The beginnings of his career in the Low Countries were glorious. At the battle of Guinegate, he defeated the French invaders and stopped the open attempts at conquest of the French king. Admired and loved by

the people, apparently happy with his young wife—though he no more understood her French than she his High German—he seemed destined to play a brilliant role in Netherland history. With his support, Duchess Mary could ignore the concessions she had been forced to make in the revolutionary years after her father's death. The new rulers resolved to take up where Philip II had left off, and to rebuild the central administration after French models. Under the Habsburgs as well as under the Burgundians French conceptions of political administration guided the court of Brussels. Coming from Germany, where their authority was most limited, the Habsburgs found the French system a marvelously efficient means of government.

However, the glory of Maximilian did not last. He was one of those princes whose intemperate character, perhaps even more their bad luck, spells failure to their most cherished plans. Mary of Burgundy died after only five years of married life and reign. The people who had once revolted against her would never have deserted her, for she always and under all circumstances was their "natural princess." Maximilian was merely a foreigner and his subjects made him feel it, not only the rebellious Flemings but even more the higher aristocracy, the numerous and powerful bastards of Burgundy, Philip of Cleve and many others. Mary's four-year-old son Philip was now the "natural" prince. Maximilian, although appointed regent and guardian of his child by Mary on her death bed, was roughly pushed aside.

The States General, after some hesitation, decided to recognize him as Regent, but—they made it perfectly clear—only to carry out *their* political views. It was *they* who made peace with France and in so doing disregarded Maximilian's feelings and delivered his little daughter into the hands of his mortal enemy, King Louis, while *they* decided that the duchy of Burgundy was not worth fighting for. They warned Maximilian that they would fight no wars and pay no taxes for the benefit of the Habsburg dynasty or for the Regent's political schemes. They accused him of "plundering the country and carrying off its wealth to Germany," an accusation which to Maximilian, poor and penniless as he was, must have sounded like a derision. The higher he rose in Germany, where in 1486 he was elected "King of the Romans," the more suspect he became in the Low Countries. The States General strengthened their connections with France, even to the extent of giving the wily old Louis XI undue influence in Lowland affairs. Returning from Germany with the royal crown, Maximilian was hailed by the court poets as the successor of the Caesars but was jailed by the guilds of Bruges. Before his eyes, his friends were executed, and he himself, the Emperor-elect, was forced to kneel before an altar in the mar-

ket place at Bruges and swear that he would never take revenge for the insults suffered. Once free, he broke his oath and revolt flared up all through Flanders, Brabant, Holland, and Utrecht.

There was a great deal of provincialism behind these uprisings. The power of the central government was to be curbed. Yet nobody, except a very few of the nobility of Holland, wanted it abolished. The Burgundian-Lowland state might well have fallen apart had it not been for the determination of the States Assemblies to stick together as a Lowland federation. Nobody except Maximilian was interested in the recovery of the duchy of Burgundy, the native state of the dynasty which was conquered by Louis in 1477. With the interests of their prince in Artois and some other French-speaking territories the States dealt lightly. Those of Flanders even considered giving up all the Walloon country to the king of France. But they were willing to fight for the independence of the other provinces, and they were determined to keep them free from France as well as outside all Imperial authority. After Maximilian's betrayal of his solemn pledge to the people of Bruges, Philip of Cleve organized the rebels and became their leader. He called all Lowlanders to join the national cause against the Habsburgs, who planned to "incorporate" the Low Countries into their "Austrian" empire. Young Philip was to be the ruler and the native aristocrats his advisors, to the exclusion of all foreigners. The Netherlands, the prince of Cleve proclaimed, "were subject to God and the Sun alone," not to any king or emperor. Here the centuries-old political aspirations of the western coastlands were brought to their logical conclusion: complete separation from both France and Germany.

Philip of Cleve met with support all through the provinces, in the northern marshes of Holland, as in the southern plains of Flanders. Yet he was doomed to fail. The success of his "national" revolution depended on too many kinds of local issues and social conditions. He had set an example by joining the revolt, but most of his peers, members of the new upper-aristocracy created by the Burgundians, refused to break definitely with the king-archduke in whose service they could win fame and estates. Philip's soldiers were the guildsmen of Flanders, irritated by the decline of Flemish industry and trade, and some of the minor nobility of Holland and Utrecht, who had been reduced to secondary rank when their provinces became part of the Burgundian state. The forces of the future, the prominent merchants of Antwerp, offended by the economic particularism of the Flemish towns, the traders of Holland, the rural weavers and industrialists of Hainaut and Walloon Flanders, after some hesitation sided with the central administration, not out of sympathy for Maximilian but

because they hoped to see the obsolete economic prerogatives of the Flemish towns broken.

Philip of Cleve might have been more successful if foreign support had not failed him. The Low Countries were now in a peculiar international position. For two centuries Flanders had been a political pivot in the long series of French-English conflicts. Now Flanders had lost most of its industrial importance and the kings of England had not the same economic hold over the merchants of Antwerp and the shipowners of Holland as they had had over the weavers of Ghent and Bruges. The French-English antagonism itself no longer held first rank in western European politics. It had been replaced by the growing French-Spanish rivalry for leadership in Italy. This left the Low Countries a chance to withdraw into a policy of neutrality best suited to their interests and for the time being in accordance with the wishes of the new king of France, the inexperienced Charles VIII. As yet the Habsburgs wielded no great power and a little unrest in Flanders and Holland was enough to neutralize the danger that might otherwise have threatened France from that quarter. Hence the French king's lack of interest in Cleve's national revolution. At first supported he was left to his fate when it became clear that, whatever the outcome of the struggle, Maximilian could never mobilize the recalcitrant Lowlands for a large-scale attack on France's northern frontier.

In 1492 the last strongholds of the rebels fell before the onslaught of Maximilian's army under Duke Albrecht of Saxonia-Meissen. The war had cost the Habsburg dynasty one province, that of Guelders where, with the help of France, Charles of Egmont had been restored to the ducal throne. It left the Habsburgs deep in debt to the Saxon duke to whom they were unable to refund the cost of the campaign. In 1494 Maximilian's regency came to an end; his son Philip was declared of age and assumed the reins of government.

Duke Philip was wholly influenced by his Netherland surroundings. Through him—a boy sixteen years old—the higher aristocracy ruled. Their policy aimed at peace with France and the re-establishment of good trade relations with England. It ignored completely and deliberately the ancient feudal ties of Holland, Brabant, and other provinces with the German empire. It was indifferent to the recovery of the Burgundian inheritance. When Duke Charles of Guelders, supported by France, fought the troops of Maximilian, the government of Brussels refused to support the soldiers of their prince's father. Not to be drawn into any great European conflict was their principal maxim of policy. Their aim was to preserve the limited Lowland state as created by the early Burgundians and to maintain its

form of government as a moderately centralized monarchy in which authority would be divided between the prince and the States Assemblies. The promoters of this policy were the Croys, the Bergens, the Nassaus of Breda, the Burens, the Egmonts, the higher aristocracy whose members sought to assume the role of spokesmen for both the people and the States Assemblies. That young Philip was heir to the throne of Vienna and perhaps to the Imperial Crown, caused these nobles no satisfaction, only anxiety. They wanted him to be their "national" prince, but fate ordained otherwise.

The history of the reigns of Maximilian and Philip definitely proves that by this time the people of the Low Countries had become conscious of their national individuality. With the reign of Philip national sentiment gained political expression. The boundaries of the new national unit were still undetermined. The political aspirations of its princes usually outstripped the wishes of the aristocracy or wealthy burgher class. The latter were not interested as were the former, in Guelders or Friesland. The existing popular tendency to confine the new state to the western coastlands and Flanders involved great risks. Holland was not yet the strong economic power it was to become and Flanders, no longer what it had been. Antwerp, the brilliant center of the coastlands, was bound with chains of gold to Italian-Spanish interests on the one hand and to the Baltic towns on the other. However, it did not develop a shipping of its own. The Lowland federation was still weak and this explains the almost excessive diligence with which its leaders sought to cultivate relations with France. Sometimes it seemed that the Low Countries would reach the longed-for goal of national independence only to fall, thereafter, under the control of their southern neighbor.

Accident, pure accident, suddenly changed the course of events. In 1496 Duke Philip married the Infanta Johanna, third child of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Four years later, death had removed all other heirs to the Spanish throne and opened to young Philip, himself ruler of the Low Countries and heir to the Austrian principalities, the magnificent prospect of becoming prince consort to the queen of Spain, Naples, Sicily, and America. Overnight his outlook on world politics changed. With grief, his subjects saw him abandon his national policy of neutrality and peace for the pursuit of dynastic interests. His first care was to secure his promised Spanish inheritance, threatened by the intrigues of his father-in-law, King Ferdinand. His relations with France and England were no longer determined by the interest of the Low Countries but by the necessity of countering the moves of the king of Aragon. A favorable commercial agreement with England, secured in days of national policy,



was voluntarily abandoned for another, more advantageous to English interests, in order to bring the English king into a common front against France. Heir to the Spanish-Austrian empire and future lord of many millions, Philip would no longer tolerate the independence of the poor duchy of Guelders, which he himself, when local ruler at Brussels, had permitted to be revived. The change of policy was significant and of evil omen, as was the change of attitude among his subjects. The States General, which had not complained of the abrogation of many privileges they had extorted from Mary and Maximilian and seen rejected by Philip, suddenly closed their purse to the prospective ruler of many kingdoms. "No money for dynastic wars" was the immediate reaction of the representative classes of the provinces. Philip had but a dim conception of the difficulties that were to mar the glory of his new position when he died at Burgos in 1506.

His son Charles inherited all his titles and claims.<sup>19</sup> During his minority, the Low Countries were governed nominally by Maximilian as regent, but actually by his daughter Margareta, as "governess." Margareta understood the peculiar problems of Lowland politics, and carefully sought to promote the Habsburg dynastic interests without openly affronting the national tradition which insisted on maintaining a balance among the western powers and avoiding conflict with France. Even so, she encountered strong opposition from the aristocracy. The early recognition of Charles's coming of age, when he was only fifteen, was one of the master strokes of the leader of that aristocracy, William of Croy, Lord of Chièvres, who thus secured control over the destinies of the principality for himself and his colleagues. For a few years more they were allowed to enjoy their power and to follow their traditional policy, years in which even the turbulent Duke Charles of Guelders was permitted some respite from his endless wars with the Habsburgs. Then Destiny resumed its course, and Charles, king of Spain, Naples, and America at sixteen and emperor at nineteen, started his momentous career in which the Low Countries were automatically reduced to a secondary position.

Emperor Charles V was the last "natural" prince of the Low Countries. Born in Ghent, speaking French as his mother tongue and well acquainted with Dutch, educated by the high nobility of the Lowlands and, originally at least, beloved by the people, he could rely on the loyalty of his Netherlanders even though world-politics kept him out of the country for nearly the whole of his life. From the higher aristocracy he had little to fear for, unlike Maximilian, Charles had something to offer them—estates in Spain (where Chièvre's son became archbishop of Toledo), fame in the endless wars (by which the glory of the House of Egmont was established), and rich marriages, such as linked the Nassaus of Breda with the princes of

Orange in southern France and elevated them to the rank of sovereign rulers. Finally one of his trusted advisors, his former tutor Adrian of Utrecht, became Pope Adrian VI, the only native Netherlander to occupy the See of St. Peter.

Charles's reign, his struggle with France and with the Reformation in Germany, have often been described. We are concerned only with his actions in the Low Countries where his rule was of decisive importance. Under his administration the international legal status of the United Provinces was adjusted to the national development of the last century. An eastern frontier was established which persists almost unchanged to the present day. He it was who gave definite shape and form to the still somewhat amorphous Lowland state. In a long and often pitiless struggle, his troops conquered all the territories to which Charles held unsatisfied claims: Friesland (he pretended as count of Holland) and Guelders (he claimed by right of purchase as well as conquest). The bishopric of Utrecht, already under the indirect control of the Burgundian-Habsburg family, was incorporated into Charles's principality thanks to a fortunate coincidence in Italy and in the Low Countries.

In this forty years' war for the possession of the northeastern provinces, Duke Charles of Guelders headed the anti-Habsburg elements. Rough, selfish, even brutal, obsessed by a fixed idea that grew into anti-Habsburg mania, this indomitable prince carried on a destructive war against an overwhelmingly superior enemy for four decades, supported only by the sympathy of his people and the intermittent assistance of the king of France. Although this war must have exhausted the already poor duchy of Guelders, Duke Charles retained the loyalty of his subjects who were united with him in their dogged resistance to the "French" government of Brussels and its attacks on their "Germanic" liberties, and against the "foreigners" from Holland and Brabant. These terms "French" and "Germanic" are found in the writings of the time and have a definite national meaning. Holland, Brabant, and of course the Walloon provinces, once forming part of the Empire, had long since been estranged from Germany. Guelders, Groningen, the "Oversticht" of Overijssel, Drente, and even Utrecht were not, however, and with the growing national consciousness east of the Rhine, they were on the point of being drawn into the German national group. They were separated from Nether-Germany before their ties with the East had become too strong. But it was a close call.

To understand the significance of this fact and the reasons for the defeat of Guelders, one must bear in mind conditions in the fastly decaying German Empire. Its real name, the "Holy Roman Empire," was so typically medieval and so reminiscent of extinct forms of thought that its use was

limited to official documents. The territory of the Empire had been slowly reduced until it contained mostly German-speaking lands and the terms "Empire" and "Germany" had become almost synonymous. The conception of "Germany" as a country with its own nationality and the "German" language as the tongue of a greater Germanic group, developed at about the same time. The use of the native tongue in literature and documents naturally led to the gradual introduction of a common literary language in large parts of the Empire. High German developed more quickly than Low German, but around the middle of the XVth century, with the intensification of trade relations, the increase in prosperity, and the establishment of institutions for higher learning in Northern Germany, Low German also became a recognized medium of literary expression and communication.

The invention of printing naturally promoted the use of Low German. Printing made possible an appeal to larger masses of readers; and since these masses were acquainted only with their local dialects, it also made imperative the use of words commonly understood. In learned publications the use of Latin bridged the linguistic gap, but if a writer wanted to deal with problems of popular interest he was obliged to use a more popular medium. Thus, the great religious controversies of the early XVIth century not only promoted but were dependent upon the use of the vernacular. High German did not meet these requirements in Nether-Germany. As later events proved Dutch could have done so in large parts of the area, but it was only natural that Low German as a literary language gained wide recognition in the first half of the XVIth century. Westphalia and the Low Countries were the center of the Anabaptist movement, and the Mennonite sect originated in Friesland. It was natural therefore that the voluminous literature advocating these religious trends, should be written in Low German. The Hanseatic League whose influence extended as far west as Utrecht, was another force promoting the use of the same language. Guelders, Friesland, and Groningen fell within this new linguistic sphere of influence.

For a while it seemed that two German languages instead of one would develop and one of them gain a firm hold on the eastern provinces of the present Netherlands. Such an evolution might have changed the course of history in central Europe. Actually, Low German gave way to High German after a century of struggle in which it was exposed to constant pressure from the west where the Dutch tongue pressed eastward, and from the south where the High German pressed northward. By the second half of the XVIth century, this evolution had made considerable progress. The question then arose, where would the future demarcation between

High German and Dutch be established? Obviously the linguistic boundary could have formed along a line quite different from the present political boundary. Although usually ignored this is self-evident. Once we grasp its meaning we understand the importance of the conquest of the eastern provinces by Charles V. It was this that assured the extension of the Dutch language and culture as far as the present political boundary.

Assimilation of the western "Overland," i.e. Low German districts was not difficult, but Charles never saw the present boundary as the final limit of Netherland expansion. Contacts with Cleve, with Bentheim, a small country southeast of Drente, with East Friesland, and even with Muenster were numerous. Some of these territories fell definitely within the sphere of interest of the Low Countries. In the XVIIth century, Dutch political influence and the Dutch language penetrated beyond the present boundary. The subsequent political evolution and the linguistic victory of High German over its competitors, finally made national and political boundaries coincide. *Post factum* this gave to the conquests of Charles V, the appearance of a final unification of the Netherlands. The latter expression, found in every textbook of Dutch history, is a perfect example of the interpretation of the past through the present.

Thus the desperate struggle between Charles of Guelders and the heirs of the Burgundians was more than an episode in the internal development of the Netherlands. It represented the first deliberate attempt to wrest a section from the vague Low German block of land and people. The Duke of Guelders showed some understanding of the peculiar character of his position. Besides mobilizing against the Habsburgs all discontented elements in Utrecht and Friesland, and assuming the leadership over the powerful city of Groningen, he turned constantly to the east to secure the support of Low German powers. He was active in the free cities of Bremen and Hamburg, as well as in Brunswick. Yet a purely personal conviction, to which he clung stubbornly, proved fatal to him. Nothing could have been more profitable to his cause than help from the new power of Lutheranism. Most of the North German cities, the princes of Saxonia, Hessen, and Lueneburg, and not a few episcopal princes had joined the Reformation. If Charles of Guelders had done the same, his cause would have become that of Protestantism, which the Emperor might defeat but could not conquer. But, even as leader of the anti-Burgundian faction, the duke of Guelders, educated in France and inclined to follow French examples, would not hear of turning Lutheran. He persecuted the Reformation in his own land even more savagely than did Emperor Charles in his part of the Low Countries. Naturally, the attempt of Guelders to side with the Imperial faction in religion while fighting it in politics was doomed

to failure. It is of historical interest that French influence, which had helped the separation of the western Low Countries from Germany, was just strong enough to prevent Guelders from drifting to the German side in times to come.

In this last, desperate struggle for provincial independence, the ancient Frisian freedom was doomed. The "seven Frisian sealands," split into three units, two of which fell to Charles's Lowland principalities while one was thrown back into the orbit of the Empire. In vain the Frisians invoked their great charter, allegedly granted by Charlemagne himself. Even the confirmation of these supposed liberties by the Emperor Sigismund in 1417 proved of no avail. "Charlemagne's charter was sealed with a seal of butter and could not bear the sunlight," the enemies of Friesland mocked. The Frisians themselves contributed more to the downfall of their ancient free republic than their enemies. Continuous party strife during the XIVth and XVth centuries had brought in foreign elements. The counts of Holland of the Bavarian dynasty, the city of Groningen, and then Duke Albrecht of Meissen, general in Maximilian's service, had successively held control over Friesland in the name of one party or of another.

East of Lauwers Bay, the civil war strengthened the position of the village headmen to such an extent that from this chaotic period emerged a new aristocracy, involved in constant feuds. The treacherous waters of the Dollart Bay formed a natural hiding place for pirates with whom many of the local aristocrats agreed in their conception of good and evil and the best way to make a living. The trading centers of the neighborhood, Groningen, Bremen, and Hamburg could hardly look on idly while their merchants were despoiled by these lawless elements. Hamburg intervened in the region of the Ems, east of the Dollart. By political and economic measures Groningen extended its influence over the *Ommelanden*, the districts west, north, and east of its city walls. Thus, the land on the Ems, garrisoned by Hamburg troops, became a separate political unit under the leadership of the Cirksena family of Grietseel. In 1469, Emperor Frederick granted this family the title of count of East Friesland and rank among the princes of the Empire. West of the Dollart, Groningen extended its influence as far as Lauwers Bay. Thus, the Frisian lands were once more partitioned and the name Friesland finally restricted to three districts between the Lauwers and the Zuiderzee. Here, the language of the Frisians survives until today. Some of the ancient institutions too, retained sufficient vitality to remain in force under the new Habsburg administration.

By his war with Guelders, Charles not only made good his claim to Friesland but also acquired the territory of the bishopric of Utrecht to which he had no right whatever. The ecclesiastical principality was unable

to defend itself against the constant incursions of Guelders troops. In 1528 the last prince-bishop ceded his secular possessions to the emperor, an unheard-of thing, for the lands of the Church could never be alienated. In 1527, Imperial troops had conquered and sacked Rome, taking the Pope prisoner. This made Pope Clement VII for a while a meek instrument in the hands of the Emperor, and Papal approval was readily granted to the cession of Utrecht. It remained to be seen whether the bishop's subjects were willing to acknowledge their new lord. The city of Groningen readily accepted the overlordship of Charles who supported its economic interests against those of the *Ommelanden*. City and countryside were united in a new province, *Stad en Landen*, a mésalliance of the worst type which for two centuries suffered from ceaseless family quarrels. The province of Drente, peasant country without a single town, was a union of six districts each divided into village communities in which the head of every family voted without regard to descent or rank. Although a few noblemen, so poor that for generations they provided the stock type of the aristocratic beggar, took part in all judicial and administrative affairs of the diet of their own right, the influence of the peasantry was predominant. The acceptance of Charles as lord of Drente changed nothing in the ancient form of local self-government of this faraway territory, hidden in the moors and off the main trade routes. All these provinces—Friesland, Groningen, Drente, and Overijssel—accepted Charles with relief born of freedom from constant warfare, but not without stipulating in formal deeds the full preservation of their liberties.

The same was true of Guelders, where before his death in 1538, Duke Charles saw his will flouted by the refusal of the States Assembly to accept his heir designate, the king of France. Instead they elected the duke of Cleve, Juliers, and Berg. This reformed the traditional Rhineland federation. Emperor Charles could not further postpone the conquest of Guelders, as the new duke was inclined to Protestantism and might introduce the Reformation in his states, thus bringing his predecessor's anti-Habsburg policy to a logical conclusion. In 1543 the Emperor attacked Juliers with superior forces and compelled the cession of Guelders by the treaty of Venlo which also contained explicit guarantees from the new prince to the States of Guelders for their freedoms. The Guelders episode in XVIth century Netherland history is of great interest because it established what proved to be the final boundary between Dutch and German territory and also because it throws light upon XVIIth century and XVIIIth century problems of Netherland history, especially the lasting contrast between the so-called "sea-provinces" (Holland and Zeeland) and the "land-provinces" (incorporated into the Netherland state through the war of the two

Charles'). After the subjugation of the northeastern provinces, the older and more natural federation of the coastal provinces remained distinct within the new combination of the "Seventeen Netherlands."

The Emperor sought to impress upon the outside world that the Low Countries now formed an indivisible political entity. The first step was a readjustment of their relations with the Empire, for which the Diet of Augsburg, convened after the defeat of the Protestant German princes, provided a favorable opportunity. A decision was reached by this Diet in 1548, providing that all the Low Countries under the rule of Charles V—by this formula Liège was excepted—would form a separate "Kreis" or administrative unit within the Empire, enjoying its theoretical protection in return for a modest annual payment. The States General saw to it that the payment remained as hypothetical as the protection. Moreover and this was far more important, the Low Countries were no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the Imperial Chamber of Justice—the Reichskammergericht. Brabant had been exempted as early as 1356. Flanders, after 1529 politically separated from France and incorporated into the Empire, had never been subject to it. Holland had assiduously ignored it. Nevertheless the judicial separation of the Low Countries from Germany was a most important step towards the recognition of their complete independence.

By securing the consent of all the provincial States Assemblies to a new law of succession, Charles provided against the possible partition of his new state. He still wanted to make a kingdom of the Low Countries, but he understood the aversion of his subjects to political innovation too well to press the point. He had made good all the legal claims he had inherited from the Burgundian dukes, and for the time being he was satisfied, although his government remained alert for the eventual openings that might lead to further expansion eastward. East Friesland could be claimed as a part of the original Frisian coastlands. The county of Lingen in Westphalia was actually acquired for the House of Habsburg but not incorporated into the union of the "Seventeen provinces."<sup>20</sup>

Charles who only occasionally visited his Lowland domains, was satisfied to leave a good deal of liberty to his representatives in Brussels, his aunt Margareta of Austria and later his sister Mary of Hungary. Besides these governors, members of the higher aristocracy served as *stadhouders*, lieutenant-governors in the provinces, as councilors and as military commanders. One man usually held several such offices. The technical work of administration was carried on by members of the gentry and of the burgher class, trained lawyers or members of hierarchy of the Church. Tedious and complicated questions of administration and finance were not to the taste of the higher aristocracy who in turn resented the influence

of lower-class people in matters of high politics. The difficulty was solved by Charles in a decree of 1531, dividing the "Great Council" into two parts, the "Secret Council" for administration, and the "Council of State," a small group of personal advisors of high rank, for matters of general policy. This was a necessary reform, but it tended to create the impression that the high nobility had a right to the direction of political affairs and were the natural spokesmen of the people. They already considered themselves the defenders of the country in their military capacity as commanders of the *bandes d'ordonnance*, a cavalry militia recruited from the gentry and maintained at the expense of the States General. This extraordinary power concentrated in the hands of the high nobility was not to be surrendered without a struggle.

After 1543 the inter-provincial wars which had been the curse of the Low Countries during the Middle Ages, came to an end. Peace reigned and prosperity increased. Contemporary writers like the Italian Ludovico Guicciardini in 1567, could find no words to praise the prosperity of the Low Countries, the wealth of commerce and agriculture, the numbers of their cities, the butter, the cheese, the horses, the cattle, the trees along the roads. "Though Holland produces no wine," he said, "its inhabitants drink more of it than the people who grow it." "The butter and cheese," he continued, "represent a value equal to that of the spices brought by Portugal from the Indies." But visitors, once taken with admiration for a foreign country, tend to exaggerate. Our knowledge of the social and economic conditions prevailing in the Netherlands in the XVIth century, is still far from complete.

There is little doubt that the northern Low Countries suffered heavily from the civil wars during Maximilian's rule and from the wars with Guelders. The peasantry saw their crops destroyed on the fields. Many small cities were looted. For decades the Zuiderzee was unsafe for shipping because of Frisian partisans who plundered any merchantman with a valuable cargo. However, the general trend of social development was not interrupted. Free peasants working their own soil still predominated in the western coastlands and in Friesland. Tax records going back to the beginning of the XVIth century, permit a fairly accurate computation of land ownership. In Groningen one-seventh of the soil belonged to the monasteries and convents, while all other ecclesiastical institutions together possessed a little less than one-eighth. These Church lands were leased out to tenants whose position was more secure than that of modern tenant farmers. Of the remaining three-quarters of the soil, the majority was in the hands of free peasants. In Friesland, where the Church also possessed about one-fourth of the land, the nobility held only one-twelfth. In Hol-



land, the situation was much more complicated, for there the burghers of the towns competed with the Church and the nobility in the acquisition of land. Even so, the farmers were for the most part the owners of the land they worked. We know that in the district of Rijnland 40,000 acres were tilled by the owners as against 24,000 by tenants. The Church holdings were only moderately large. In Uitgeest the Church possessed 3,500 out of a total of 14,000 acres, which was a very high percentage, for usually its landed property in this county amounted to no more than a tenth of the total acreage.<sup>21</sup>

There were some two hundred noble families in Holland who possessed *ambachtsheerlijkheden*, or seigneurial rights in the villages. But these rights were limited: the levying of a head-tax on descendants of former bondsmen, the income from highway tolls, fishing and hunting rights. All these sources of revenue were fixed by tradition, usually at a low sum. The seigneur was normally the principal landowner in his village, but the average extent of seigneurial lands was not more than four hundred acres. Moreover, the influence of the nobility was limited and retroceding. In West Friesland, the feudal system had never taken root. Around the cities great inroads were made in it by the townspeople. The city of Amsterdam gradually bought up the seigneuries around the city walls to have freedom of expansion and control over the economic activities of the village people.

Perpetuation of a number of seigneuries in the hands of a single family of the higher aristocracy further reduced the influence of the gentry as a class. Four members of the higher aristocracy had extensive possessions in Holland around 1550: Egmont, Nassau-Breda, Hoorne, and Brederode, who together controlled (but did not own outright) 39,000 acres out of a total of about 309,000 acres in Holland. The gentry of Holland formed an upperclass without exaggerated pretensions or sufficient power to become oppressive, and had a real function in Holland society. Its members lived in close touch with the burgher and the peasant class and were able to represent the latter which as yet could not easily make its voice heard in public. The gentry handled the more intricate problems of rural economy and organization. They were usually the controllers of the dykes and polders and were the entrepreneurs of new drainage systems. In Zeeland, especially, their efforts in this direction were very assiduous.

The number of farms steadily increased and their average size decreased accordingly. The countryside of Holland, prosperous as it was, could not support its population. One means to remedy this would have been to reclaim land from the sea and the inland waters but the first half of the XVIth century was not propitious to so constructive a task. Great exertions were made in Zeeland, where the island of Beveland expanded rapidly to

the west, but as much ground was lost in the east through the extraordinary floods of 1509, 1530, and 1532. The island of Overflakkee was truly created out of hitherto useless shoals. The island of Tholen, which had begun to take shape in the XVIth century—in 1411 the polder of Vossemeer, the traditional home of the Roosevelt family, was dyked in—grew nearly double in size. Gains and losses were nearly equal in this part of the country. Holland lost more than it gained. The first heroic attempt to close in part of the sea, the Bay of the Zijpe at Holland's northern point, an enterprise for which plans had been made as long ago as 1388, seemed doomed to failure, when in 1556, the direct intervention of King Philip II, son of Charles V, brought the work to a successful conclusion. A few small inland lakes were drained, but far larger ones were created by thoughtless peat-digging along Holland's eastern frontier. The chain of lakes and pools stretching from Utrecht to Naarden, east of the Vecht, was thus brought into existence.

It became more and more evident that the task of defending the country against the sea had outgrown the capacity of small local communities. Central, or at least provincial, control was instituted. Special funds were needed and this brought about the curious phenomenon of the "dyke-indulgence" of 1515. While traveling through Holland, Charles V, then only fifteen years old, noticed the bad condition of several important dykes. Learning that an indulgence had recently been promulgated in Rome to collect money for the new church of St. Peter and rightly thinking the dykes more important than even the most marvelous Renaissance architecture, he prevented the proclamation of the indulgence in the Netherlands and obtained from the Pope a similar favor for all who contributed to the maintenance of the dykes. At the same time Rome consented to the levying of a ten percent tax on all ecclesiastical income in the Low Countries for the same purpose. More than 75,000 ducats were received from the indulgence alone but, if we believe Erasmus, not a penny was spent on the dykes. In Holland large scale drainage and land-winning enterprises were undertaken only after a wealthy burgher class, willing to risk large capital in this rather speculative project, had developed in the towns.

The countryside of Holland and Zeeland may have been prosperous and its dairy production already important, but alone it could never give the provinces the exceptional position they gained within a few decades. The States of Holland gave the facts very clearly in a petition to the Emperor, Charles:

"It is noticeable that the province of Holland is only a small country, not very long and still less wide, enclosed by the sea on three sides. It must

be protected against the sea by dykes, which leads to great expenditure for dykes, sluices, mills and moats. Moreover it contains many dunes, moors, and inland waters which grow more extensive day by day, barren lands unfit for fields or pastures. For these reasons the inhabitants with their wives and children, in order to make a living must devote themselves to industry and commerce in such a manner that they fetch raw materials from foreign countries and export to Spain, Portugal, Germany, Scotland, and especially to Denmark and the countries of northern Europe. From these they buy enormous quantities of wheat. Consequently the main industry of the country is shipping and related trades, and from this many people live, like merchants, skippers, sailors, shipbuilders, and carpenters."

The prudent representatives somewhat exaggerated the poverty of their native soil to impress upon their sovereign how far-reaching the consequences of his foreign and financial policies might be for the welfare of his subjects. Nevertheless their statement was true enough. A constantly increasing proportion of the people depended on the fisheries and the Baltic commerce, with their related trades of shipping and handling salt, building ships and importing wood, producing hemp, importing tar, manufacturing naval equipment, and whatever was necessary to support the main trades. Around 1560 Holland and Zeeland sent nearly 600 ships with crews of twenty men each to the fishing grounds every year. Thus twelve thousand fishermen made their living from the industry besides numerous craftsmen and dealers who drew their incomes from the same source. Including the families of the fishermen and shore workers, more than fifty thousand people in the two provinces depended upon the fisheries for their living. Imagine a trade providing for thirteen million inhabitants of the United States, and it will be possible to understand the full meaning of Adriaan Coenzoon's lines written in 1577:

"This is why in my other great work on the fisheries I named the herring *Gratia Dei*, for people make this their daily food far more than any other fish, also because it brings so great a trade among our Netherland people who win their daily bread from it. We might as well call these fisheries the Golden Mountain or the Triumph of Holland. Had Cicero lived in this country in the time of the herring, he would have found a more beautiful name for it."

The fishing boats spent half a year on the fishing grounds. The rest of the time they traded as freighters with Norway and Spain and in the Baltic. In the Baltic trade the Holland ships gradually outnumbered those of the Hansa. In 1503, 850 out of 1,220 ships passing the Sund came from the Low Countries, and 455 of these were from Holland. War, acts of piracy

by the Frisian partisans, and a general state of insecurity caused a decrease in the next thirty years. In 1545, 580 out of 934 ships sailing through the Sund were from Holland. In 1560 they numbered a thousand out of 2,730, but in 1565 they were 2,130 out of 3,480. After 1565 the outbreak of the political and religious disturbances caused another short relapse, preceding the era of greatest prosperity. The trade with Spain and Portugal, the counterpart of that in the Baltic, developed as rapidly.

The trade movement to the west is more difficult to follow from the available documents, than that to the east, where by levying Sund tolls the kings of Denmark provided convenient records for future historians. We know that trade with France and Spain had gained such importance by the middle of the XVIth century that a war with France caused to the people of Holland a loss of more than two million guilders in ships and goods at the hands of French privateers. We know also that the Netherlands ships sailed far beyond Spain. In 1508, a Zeeland ship entered the port of Veere with a cargo of sugar from the Canary Islands. They did not venture into the Mediterranean until the end of the century. Nevertheless, before that date they did a considerable share of the Portuguese trade. The Flemings of Bruges and the Brabanders of Antwerp had been the principal financial backers of Portuguese overseas enterprises since the XVIth century. As already stated they had taken part in the colonization of the Azores. It did not take the shipping interest of Holland and Zeeland very long to take part in the commercial exploitation of the newly opened regions, first as freight carriers from Lisbon to the north, then, under charter from Portuguese merchants and under the Portuguese flag, for the carrying trade between Portugal and Brazil and the coast of Guinea.

Remarkable as was the steady expansion of commerce and shipping in Holland, it was matched by the economic organization of these trades. The ships and men mentioned in the records are from all parts of Holland. Small towns of the northern sector—Edam, Monnikendam, Enkhuizen, Medemblik, Hoorn—are frequently represented. That did not mean that commercial enterprises were equally scattered over the country. The people of all the coastal villages and towns had their share in shipping and fishing but they were mostly on the payrolls of the merchants of the larger cities, especially Amsterdam. The poor village people could never provide the capital required for these enterprises. Even for the herring fishing, besides the ownership of a boat, an outlay of a thousand to fifteen hundred guilders was required for every trip to the banks. Economically the northern countryside was dependent upon the merchants of Amsterdam.<sup>22</sup>

Here, on the roadstead of the IJ, the deep inlet of the Zuiderzee which

nearly divided Holland into two parts, as many as 500 ships were at times anchored. Compared with Antwerp where 2,500 ships were often loading and unloading at one time along the quais of the Scheldt, the number was still small. But nearly all the vessels visiting Amsterdam were built and owned in Holland, while most of the ships plying the Scheldt were owned and operated by Hanseatics, Spaniards, and other foreigners. Amsterdam was a shipping center of importance, but until the wars of liberation, Antwerp remained the economic and financial center of northern Europe.

Holland, as pictured here, was still a country of seafaring folk and peasants, free and relatively prosperous if times were favorable, but not wealthy, with a scattered upper layer of society consisting of well-to-do, self-willed country aristocrats and of enterprising small-scale capitalists in the principal towns. The gentry stuck to their rights in the rural districts, and the city capitalists used all their influence and power to maintain their control over public affairs in the towns. The working classes, both seamen and landsmen, often protested against the growing exclusiveness of the ruling classes but with little chance of success. The central authorities favored oligarchy in city government. Resentment thus stored up played its part in the revolution of the last quarter of the century.

Conditions in the eastern provinces were different. The overseas trade of the IJsseltowns were rapidly declining, and the turmoil of the Guelders wars gave the deathblow to an economic activity which was already struggling without hope against the daring competition of Holland. The inland trade prospered, however, once peace was restored to the Rhine and IJssel lands. Deventer again became the center of the Westphalian export trade. Herds of cattle, oxen, cows, and hogs were driven overland from Holstein and Denmark. The yearly fairs were visited by more than 1,500 wagons from Muenster and Paderborn, from Hessen and Thuringen. Along the Rhine the products of the duchy of Berg and the county of Mark, now better known as the industrial area of the Ruhr, came via Cologne to Deventer, Arnhem, Dordrecht, and Nijmegen. Copper and iron, coal and charcoal were shipped down the river as they were in peace times in our day. Yet, the towns of the eastern Lowlands were far less important in the general economic structure of the Netherlands than those of Holland. In the east the rural nobility yielded greater power both in public affairs and in rural economy. The Veluwe, Guelders' northwestern forest district and the sandy plains of Overijssel, were the only places in the Low Countries where part of the peasantry still lived in bondage. The burden was not heavy and the bondsmen's rights guaranteed by customary law, for, where ancient customs and institutions remained in force, ancient freedom also prevailed.

The incessant and methodical interference of the central administration with local institutions resulted in a latent but ever present conflict between the representatives of the emperor and of the people organized in their social groups. The new monarchy was only a loose federation of autonomous provinces bent on independence, and in turn each province was hardly more than a union of towns and rural districts, with interests more often in conflict than in harmony. Under Charles V, when the prince had become an absentee overlord, it was no longer the ruler's personality but the States Assembly that in the eyes of the people represented the province as a political entity. The States naturally developed into a regular institution, a vital part of the governmental system, with their own officials and their own funds. The officials of the central government, the Council or Court, were regarded more or less as representatives of a foreign power. The conviction that the States not only represented but *were* the province was nowhere stronger than in the newly acquired northeastern districts. Though conquered by force of arms they took the stand that they had recognized Charles as their prince freely and of their own will, and were his subjects by their own consent. They considered their acceptance of the Habsburg ruler in the nature of a contract, freely entered into and binding both parties by specific obligations. In 1533, Charles tried to institute a Council of Overijssel and to refer a number of cases to the Council as a Court of Appeal. The States of Overijssel declared that such institutions had never been heard of and simply ignored their existence. In Guelderland an identical struggle took place. The States had accepted the Council under their "contract" with Charles, but accused it of gross violations of their privileges. In 1560 the members of the States once more formed an "alliance" to oppose innovations. They even appointed a permanent committee to test the legality of every act of the Council. And whenever the princely councilors dared to mention "written" or Roman law, a storm of protest rose.

A common front formed against the prince did not mean union among themselves. Each province was the scene of conflicts of interest, of such frequency and violence that the country often seemed on the verge of civil war. First there was constant antagonism in the later Middle Ages between the laity and the clergy. The misdeeds of unworthy individual ecclesiastics and their abuse of spiritual authority provided a wonderful arsenal for the laity in their struggle against the privileges of the priests. Yet such abuses provoked the wrath of the townspeople less than the competition of the monasteries and convents in certain trades such as those in wine and beer, and in the manufacture and sale of clothing and household goods outside the guilds and below their fixed prices. The towns became more and more

alarmed by the threat to their freedom and from the gradual but steady increase of land in the hands of the ecclesiastical institutions. Laws were passed and enforced for the correction of many of these grievances.

The constitutional position of the clergy was weak. Only in the province of Utrecht were they strongly represented in the States Assembly. In two other provinces, Friesland and Zeeland, they had some voice. All the other States Assemblies were composed wholly of laymen. The clergy reacted weakly, knowing that the central government favored the point of view of the laity. They contended that there was no reason to complain of their judicial immunities which were not respected anyway and declared they had often shown willingness to compromise in matters of trade and taxes. There was not much they could say because the shortcomings of the existing system were self evident. In 1514 a small town like Haarlem had seven monasteries and twelve convents, only a few of which could really justify their existence, even from the medieval point of view. Large monasteries with only a few monks in residence were no exception. The towns, the nobility, the central government in turn assailed the position and property of the Church. The future revealed which of the three was finally to gain from these attacks.

More damaging to general welfare was the antagonism between the urban and rural communities. The villages constantly fought the industrial monopolies of the towns, by manufacturing goods and selling beer and wine outside the jurisdiction of the guilds with their price regulations, and outside the city's power of taxation. The gentry upheld the rights of the countryside. The towns responded by buying up the suburban seigneuries and enforcing their repressive economic policy in the capacity of feudal lords. Life in the XVIth century towns was monotonous, and the citizens spent so much of their time in the taverns within and without the city walls, and drank such amazing quantities, that the taxes on beer and wine provided the towns with a most important source of income. The unrelenting efforts of the towns to repress and destroy all industrial activity in the countryside, made relations between these two sections of the population tense indeed. In Groningen, to quote a contemporary, "the city and its Ommelanden lived in such violent mutual dislike as had never been heard of either among the Turks or among mankind."

Town versus countryside was not the only conflict among XVIth century Netherlanders. Towns opposed towns and these interurban conflicts were matched by dissensions in each town among the inhabitants. It had always been the policy of the Burgundian dukes to foster oligarchy in the towns, to control the councils and the election of jurors and burgomasters. The often unruly guilds had been brought under strict supervision. Mu-

municipal finances nearly everywhere were disorganized as a result of the long wars, the heavy demands of the central government, and the rapid devaluation of gold and silver that followed the looting of the Aztecs and Incas by the Spaniards. A difficult period of economic transition ensued during which the ruling classes were naturally blamed for the difficulties. Having no voice in the city governments the guilds were constantly bringing pressure to bear upon the oligarchs, and there were other organizations that could speak for the citizens. Each town had to provide a *schutterij* or city guard for its own defenses. The citizens enrolled in this guard elected their own officers and often had their own buildings for social gatherings as well as for military exercises. When these *schutters* opposed the ruling oligarchy they had the armed force of the town at their back. They might have overthrown the existing system and installed a more democratic government, had not princely authority time and again supported the oligarchs, upon whom it relied for a radical reorganization and the subjugation to central authority of the contending groups and interests.

Against all these social factions with their individual rights stood the professional civil servants of the government in Brussels. They were lawyers trained in Roman law, fully convinced of the legal right of the prince to absolute sovereignty. They despised the traditional institutions and the imperfection of the ancient customary law. They interfered with the rendering of justice by the country gentry, referring as many cases as possible to provincial courts where matters were handled in writing and only a professional lawyer could find his way through the labyrinth of ordinances and statutes. They agitated against the privileges of the provinces, the cities, and the districts. These, however, were jealously guarded and now carefully collected, transcribed and entrusted to the care of officials of the States Assemblies. The State Attorney of Holland thus became, in the middle of the XVIth century, the first archivist of the province.

"It is strange," the States of Overijssel once said, "that our prince has undertaken to institute new officers and new authorities of which the people have never heard before, a practice never tolerated by the States of the province." "It is strange to conceive," the officers of the emperor said about the same time in Utrecht, "that His Majesty the Emperor and His servants are not allowed to inflict punishment on one of His subjects, even though an ecclesiastic, without the consent of His other subjects." These two statements contain the essence of the conflict that burst into open revolt in the second half of the century.

By the middle of the XVIth century there was enough inflammable material in the Low Countries to set the whole country ablaze, even without the great spiritual conflict that divided the people into two violently opposed



camp. The Reformation started abroad, but found its first martyrs in the Low Countries. The various forms that opposition to Rome assumed were tested until the particular type of religious thought, best suited to the character of the people was found. Luther had the spontaneous support of part of the clergy, but as soon as Saxon Protestantism became better known in the Low Countries, it was criticized by the large majority of reformers there, finally to be rejected in favor of more individualistic and radical tenets originated in Alsace and in Switzerland. The Anabaptist movement found its most tragic expression in the Netherlands, where also its final creed and morality were determined. Apart from the adherents of the foreign forms of Reformation, a large group of Netherland intellectuals dreamed with Erasmus of a purified Church and shared his dislike of the stringent ties of church membership in its old as well as in its new forms. Reformers finally turned to Calvinism which offered a clear, logical, and democratic ecclesiastical organization with political principles acceptable to Netherland opinion. However, Erasmian trends of thought remained active and largely determined the religious future of the Netherlands. Thus, for their Reformation, the Netherlands turned from Germany to Switzerland and France, putting the final touch upon the separation of the Low Countries from the Empire. Later on in many places, competition between Calvinists and Lutherans coincided with that between the Dutch and High German languages.

The spread of the Reformation in the Low Countries is usually attributed to the ignorance and moral laxity of the Catholic clergy. The higher offices in the hierarchy of the Church were held by members of the gentry who coveted the income rather than the duties of the many offices for which the chapters of the churches provided handsome stipends. The lowest ranks, parish priests, vicars, and monks, were generally believed to be incompetent. Catholic authors themselves deplore the fact that ignorance of the people and other abuses made it easy for Protestantism to win over people otherwise well-disposed to the Church. Protestant authors see in the Reformation the liberation of the laity from the oppression of an almost wholly hypocritical priesthood.

Erasmus with his witty and sarcastic attacks on monks and priests, with his rancor against all monastic institutions, was largely responsible for this picture. There is no doubt that at that time abuses, even great abuses, existed in the Catholic Church, in the Netherlands as in all other countries. But those abuses had long existed and had not prevented the people being devoutly attached to their religious beliefs. As late as 1557, when Protestantism had already spread widely, a Venetian diplomat wrote from the Netherlands, "No other people show so great a devotion in attending the

holy services." Those words do not justify the interpretation placed upon them that for practical reasons a large part of the people merely did lip-service to the established Church.

The first adherents of the Lutheran reformation were all priests; and the first Protestant martyrs, Hendrik Bols and Johan van Essen, executed in Brussels on July 1, 1523, were Augustinian monks. To them Luther dedicated the hymn in which he sang of God's miraculous works *zu Brussel in Nederland*. Many priests condemned the abuses of the Church, and people came to hear them which they would not have done had they not been seriously interested in the Church. From the pulpits the defenders and opponents of Rome violently attacked each other and created such unrest that the States of Holland, reluctant to resort to repression, sought to mitigate the prevailing animosity by requiring that all controversial points be omitted from the sermons. Among the people there was intense interest in religious affairs and a yearning for reform, kindled by a true understanding of Christian principles, but at times this interest took forms to which the secular authorities were even more averse than the ecclesiastic. In the very moment when the clergy of the Low Countries provided the first enthusiastic propagandists for reform without Rome, they also provided a Pope of Rome, Adrian VI, who too defended the vigor and integrity of Christian principles, but he fared no better with the officialdom of the Vatican than his religious opponents at home fared with the officialdom of the Emperor. Adrian was by no means, of course, the only devout and learned priest in the Low Countries to defend the Catholic Church. The university of Louvain, often described as a bulwark of brutal reaction and barbaric oppression, became more and more influential in the Catholic world. With all its abuses and its many unworthy members, especially in the higher ranks, the clergy of the Low Countries provided a great number of fervent and deeply religious men who, rightly or wrongly from our point of view, worked steadfastly and selflessly for reform within the Church or for reform without the Church.

No sudden eclosion of evil practices among the ecclesiastics distinguished the reformation period in the Netherlands from former centuries, but the different light in which these abuses were viewed when a better understanding of the principles of Christianity and a deepening of religious sentiment had penetrated to the masses of the people. The influence of the *Devotio Moderna* has already been mentioned. The printing press also played an enormous role in the dissemination of religious literature, and in the awakening of new and often conflicting views on religious dogma and practice. Where these disputations would lead, nobody knew. A splitting up of the great Christian community was not intended. For a while the

whole membership of the Church seemed to be gathered in one great ecumenical council with free oral and written discussion throughout the Christian world. Both sides shared the sincere hope that the whole community would abide by the final outcome of this exchange of ideas among the faithful. The period of the reformation saw the culmination of a centuries old intensification and popularization of Christian religious opinions and theories. Some, however, considered that theological discussions were a wrong approach to the problem. They contended that, instead of clarifying the issue, the discussions merely added party strife to the already existing abuses. They followed Erasmus who had done so much to encourage criticism of prevailing conditions. His refusal to join the religious revolution did not spring from a bookworm's aversion to violent conflict, as has been said often. His views were clearly expressed when he wrote of the first Protestant martyrs:

"I know not whether I must deplore their deaths or not. Certain it is that they died with great and unheard-of steadfastness, though not for the principles but for the paradoxes of Luther, for which I would not be willing to die because I do not understand them. I know that it is glorious to die for Christ. The pious always have to suffer, but among those who suffer the impious are also found. The skill of building oneself up as an angel of light is widespread, but rare is the gift of a discreet mind."<sup>23</sup>

Did he not mean that the wise and discreet reformer ought to realize that not by changing forms and inciting to violence, but only by the incessant inward and spiritual struggle of each individual could the needed reform of the Church be accomplished? For Erasmus it was the spirit, not the form, that counted. He held that an agitation which would see the established Church overthrown rather than give up one of its peculiar tenets was presumptuous. Separation would only result in the creation of new churches which after a while would present the same abuses as the Mother Church. Practice is by no means as easy as theory, as Erasmus learned when despite his concessions to one side and another, he finally found himself rejected by both. But in the Netherlands, he had many sympathizers. The States of Holland, in forbidding the public discussion of religious issues, were prompted by Erasmian ideas.

Lutheranism spread everywhere in the Low Countries where contact with Germany was close. Merchants as well as mercenary soldiers spread it, as soon as whole areas of northern and western Germany had adopted it. But the thinkers among Netherland reformers soon turned to Zwingli and Anabaptism rapidly grew in strength among the masses, not only the poorer sections but also among the middle class. The reformers had to

face the wrath of Emperor Charles V who as king of Spain and protagonist of Christianity against Islam and as protector of the Church could make no concessions. Moreover, his personal feelings were definitely on the side of Rome, its institutions and its dogma. Worse for the Netherlands, his conception of royal authority influenced by the glorious tradition of Spain, prompted him to make use of the established Church for the furthering of his monarchic interests. The Inquisition was well known in the Low Countries, but as an ecclesiastical tribunal. In 1552, the Emperor boldly decreed that Frans van der Hulst, councilor of the Court of Brabant, a layman and lawyer, would have power to prosecute all heretics, if necessary without regard for existing forms of justice. This innovation broke with all traditions. The decree immediately brought popular sentiment on the side of the persecuted by presenting the fight against heresy as an attack on the chartered freedoms. From the very first the religious struggle became entangled in a constitutional conflict.

Many governments of the cities, many noblemen, rural judicial authorities, and even the principal councils, otherwise loyal and obedient servants of His Imperial Majesty, rebelled against the new institution. The two "commissaries for the suppression of heresy," appointed out of the Council of Holland, soon asked to be relieved of this special duty. They said that they had seen enough misery and were tired of appearing as imperturbable spectators while poor people were put to the question and suffered torture. Reproved for allowing many unfortunates to escape, they replied, "You would have felt inclined to do the same if you had seen the poverty and wretchedness of the prisoners." Officers of the Inquisition who went through the villages to round up suspects usually found the culprits gone. Even so, a number of people were executed. First to die in the Netherlands were Willem Dirks and Jan de Bakker, the latter a priest. They were excuted in 1525 in Utrecht. Protestant martyrologies indicate by name 223 persons executed during the reign of Charles V. This figure is surprisingly low, considering the ruthlessness and extreme severity of the laws against heresy. It may come as a shock to readers who have innocently accepted the figures of excited contemporaries. "Thirty thousand in Holland and Friesland alone," a Venetian diplomat reported in 1546. The difference is partly explained by the fact that the list of 223 did not include the names of those who fell in the revolt of 1535, when in an outburst of frenzied fanaticism thousands of Anabaptists rose to establish the "Kingdom of Zion" on earth. Anabaptism was brought to the Netherlands by Melchior Hofmann who had been forced to flee from Strasbourg and had come to Amsterdam where, under the protection of the liberal city government, he gained many adherents until the Council of Holland could no longer tol-

erate his activities. After his decapitation, Jan Matthyszoon of Haarlem and Jan Beukelszoon of Leiden (John of Leyden) became the leaders.

In the winter of 1533, these two prophets of revolutionary reformation established an Anabaptist republic in Muenster in Westphalia, afterwards transformed into the "Kingdom of Zion" under the rule of Jan Beukelszoon. The revolution in Muenster was mainly the work of Hollanders and found strong support all over the Netherlands. At the end of 1534, Muenster sent out a call to arms. Four emissaries were sent to plant four "banners of war" in the Low Countries. Along the coastland fanaticism rose to such heights that in Amsterdam a revolt broke out and the Anabaptists occupied the town hall; and in Friesland they tried to convert the monastery Oldeklooster into a fortress. Both positions were stormed and the rebels killed in action or executed afterwards. Loose gangs of revolutionaries, moving aimlessly through the country, were dispersed by troops. Though many hundreds died in this revolt, the number must have fallen far short of the thirty thousand reported by the Venetian diplomat.

The Anabaptist revolt is often explained as a social revolution of the poor against the rich. The poor sought and found arguments for communism in the Bible; and growing impatient to see the millennium fulfilled, they resorted to violence. There is ample evidence of revolutionary social trends in Anabaptist teaching, and there is no denying the fact that the *result* of that teaching was revolution. On the other hand, it is incorrect to associate this whole religious movement with the social revolutionary agitation of a number of its adherents. Before Muenster fell, some prominent Anabaptists had already turned away from the excesses of violence and were trying to bring the new sect back to its original beliefs, the core of which was absolute individualism in the profession of Christianity with complete renunciation of all secular ties. Christianity, for them, was spiritual; and the establishment of an organized Church in daily contact with the institutions of secular power was the first step toward the profanation of all things sacred. Menno Simonszoon, pastor of Witmarsum in Friesland, became the principal leader of this purified Anabaptism.

Nor is it true that membership in the Anabaptist movement was restricted to the poorer classes of society. Among the adherents of the sect condemned by the courts in Holland there were many whose property was valuable enough to make its confiscation a matter of interest to the authorities. The truth may be that as soon as Anabaptism began its revolutionary agitation, many people joined the movement in the belief that revolution could only improve and never injure their position. These elements remained active even after the fall of the Anabaptist sect in Muenster. Professing adherence to the "Batenburger sect," they rapidly became common

highway robbers who committed their crimes under religious slogans. Vehemently persecuted by the secular authorities and the Inquisition they were rapidly exterminated. This revolutionary Anabaptism did something to incline local officers of justice toward better cooperation with the hated Inquisition. This is borne out by the fact that ninety percent of the 233 names in the martyrologies are those of Anabaptists. Once the danger was past, however, the towns became as skeptical as ever of religious persecution.

Charles V must have taken the Anabaptist movement as definite proof that Reformation and Revolution were one and the same thing, that Luther's teachings threatened the State and society as well as the Church. Again ignoring local and provincial charters, he issued new, draconic decrees against all innovation in Church and religious affairs. A Protestant exodus resulted. Hundreds left Antwerp and the coastal provinces to find refuge in England. From northern Holland and Friesland other groups went to Emden, where they found an active Calvinist community under a Polish preacher, Johannes a Lasco. Here the Netherland Protestants, never in agreement with Luther and already strongly inclined towards Zwinglian ideas, rapidly went over to Calvinism. Here the printing presses were set in motion to produce hymn books, catechisms, and pamphlets that were to spread the new creed among those who had wavered and stayed at home to do lip service to the state religion. Other groups gathered in Cologne, in Wezel, and in Aachen. Thus were founded the refugee churches in which the Netherland reformation was moulded into definite form. From these centers just outside the national boundaries, some Netherlanders wandered south, to the Palatinate, to Alsace, and finally to Geneva where Calvin himself held sway.

The XVIth century in Netherland history was vibrant with life and full of promise for the future. Before Protestantism began really to spread, humanistic trends of thought had completely conquered the intellectual classes of society. Erasmus was naturally the standard bearer of this movement in northwestern Europe, but we must not be induced by his sarcastic references to the "barbarism" of his fellow-countrymen to believe that but for Erasmus the study of the ancient classics would not have flourished in the Netherlands. Besides Agricola and Gansfoort, who as philosophers and theologians influenced the intellectual and spiritual life of the fifteenth century, New-Latin poets added to the glory of the Netherlands. Peter van den Berg (latinized as Petrus Montanus) never rose above the modest rank of rector of schools in small towns like Alkmaar and Amersfoort, but he wrote audacious satires on the evil effect of monarchical rule. "Nothing is more depraved than royal power with its shameless abuses" is one of his

favorite themes and he illustrated it with choice historical examples. Johannes Murmellius, also from the Low Countries and one of Montanus' successors at Alkmaar, wrote the renowned *Pappae Puerorum*, a Latin grammar. This became one of the best sellers of the XVIth century. In fifty years about 30,000 copies circulated in the Low Countries and Germany. The study of Latin was brought into direct contact with daily life. Unlike our modern grammars, which call for endless translations of meaningless little exercises with boring references to the noble character of Aristides or Scipio and the virtues of Roman soldiery, it attempted a direct introduction to the language. "Educators," Murmellius wrote in his preface, "must see to it that texts for the instruction of children are written in a simple and natural style and form. Otherwise the multiplicity of verbs will upset the mind of the pupil, just as too much food upsets the stomach." And exactly as the manuals handed today to American soldiers overseas, his booklet begins with ordinary topics of conversation, the renting of rooms, the teacher, quarrels among students etc. Latin taught in this way became a living language. Janus Nicolai Secundus (Jan Claeszoon in good old Dutch) mastered it so completely that his *Basia*, a classic of lyric literature, has been imitated and translated into many languages. Ronsard and Goethe are among the many indebted to his immortal work.

Sneer as he might that the Netherlands had produced no scholars of importance, Erasmus recognized that the general standard of education was comparatively high. The Netherlands did bring forth a number of scholars who could bear comparison with those of France and Italy. Georgius Macropedius (in Dutch: Joris van Langhvelde) taught for many years in the modest Latin school of 's Hertogenbosch. He was well versed in Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldean literature and wrote twelve Latin plays, comedies and dramas. The acting of Latin plays, usually picturing Biblical episodes or having a strong moral implication, was part of the humanistic educational system. The same kind of literature brought fame to Gnapheus, or Willem de Volker of The Hague, later driven from the Netherlands by the Inquisition. The time soon came when the Humanists were forced to choose between the Reformation and the Church of Rome. Erasmus avoided it as long as possible because he resented the idea that a final choice had to be made. This "Erasmian" point of view was long and tenaciously defended by generations of Netherlanders. Although doomed to failure it permeated Netherland thinking.

The greatest of the appeasers in the religious conflict was George Cas-sander of Kadzand, in Zeeland Flanders, born in 1513, who devoted his whole life to a vain attempt at reconciliation, only to be finally ousted and condemned by both Rome and Geneva. The prince of Orange and three

successive Emperors supported him unavailingly. Cassander died in 1566, before the religious conflict had caused the general conflagration of Europe. Some of the Humanists sought to follow the Erasmian line. Others fervently supported either one or the other side in the conflict. One Netherlander among the early Jesuits rose to fame as the champion of the Counter-Reformation in Germany. This was Petrus Canisius of Nijmegen. Gerard Geldenhauer, secretary of the last Burgundian bishop of Utrecht and historian of the Batavi, whole-heartedly joined the Reformation, as did Gnapheus. Those who were stubborn in their refusal to choose between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism had to revert to subterfuge and hypocrisy. "If only," the famous Justus Lipsius wrote, "I could form my life to my own liking, I would live in solitude, amidst gardens and fields and study my books listening to the murmur of rivulets." Erasmus had also longed to sit in a garden with friends and discuss topics of eternal interest. The time was not ripe. Lipsius wandered from one university to another, from Protestant to Catholic institutions, admired for his knowledge of Tacitus but despised for his lack of moral courage. The time was to come when the educated people of the Netherlands could sit in their gardens studying philosophy and discussing literature, but it would mean that Netherland civilization was on the decline and with it, freedom and prosperity.

Janus Secundus, the greatest of Netherland New-Latin poets, counted among his friends another artist of international reputation, the painter Jan van Scoorl. Like Secundus, Scoorl was one of the artists who secured for the Netherlands their place in the picture of Renaissance civilization. The first native painters of Holland preferred to move south to the cultural centers of Bruges, Antwerp, and Brussels. The second generation produced Geertgen van Sint Jans, who helped to form the Leiden school of painting that a hundred years later gave Rembrandt to the world. By 1500 a number of artists of repute were working in the northern Low Countries. Jan Mostaert lived in Haarlem; Jacob van Oostzaenen in Amsterdam, and in 's Hertogenbosch one of the most remarkable painters of all times, Jeroen Bosch, gave free reign to his fantasy in the allegorical representation of sin and evil. Lucas van Leiden sold his first painting in 1508, when only twelve years old, and became the master engraver of Holland. The seeds that were to grow in the XVIIth century into one of the greatest schools of painting of all ages and all lands, were already sown.

It was a truly native art that flourished in the Netherlands. Few of the early Netherland painters saw as much of the world as Jan van Scoorl who traveled through Germany and Italy and who, as curator of the Papal museum of antiquities, under his fellow countryman Pope Adrian VI,



made first hand studies of classic and Renaissance art. Italian models influenced the art of the Netherlands but never so much that they affected its basic elements. Again the contrast between the art protected and sponsored by the court in Brussels and that produced by the people is noticeable. Bernaert van Orley, court painter in the first half of the XVIth century, followed almost exclusively the great models of Italy. The northern painters, not uninfluenced by the same examples, relied mostly for the subjects and the details of their pictures on what they saw in the world in which they actually lived. The Netherland painters learned much from Italy, but only to master and assimilate what the south could teach.

His health gravely impaired, Charles abdicated in 1555, and divided his inheritance between his son Philip and his brother Ferdinand. The Spanish crown and all its possessions fell to Philip, Austria to Ferdinand. It would have been only natural for the Low Countries, organized as a separate entity within the Empire by Charles himself, to have been thrown in with Ferdinand's share. But Charles looked upon the Lowlands as first of all the property of his family. The interests of their people, of the Empire, of the northern branch of the Habsburg dynasty did not count. Spain was the core of his power. Spain would go to his son, and to strengthen her position, Spain was to have a fortress in northern Europe to outflank if need be both France and England. The holding of an advanced and exposed position sometimes saps the strength of the whole defense. That was what befell Spain in the XVIth century.

## CHAPTER VII

### “All This For Freedom’s Sake”

ONLY a few years after the accession of King Philip, the first signs of the great Netherland revolt were clearly discernible. This most important of all periods in Netherland history began with a political revolution by the high aristocracy. It spread as an anti-Spanish and anti-clerical movement that found its principal adherents among the gentry and the burgher class. Finally, after a short period of repression, it led to a general revolt in which all elements of religious, political or social discontent participated. The numerous conservatives who chose to sacrifice part of their convictions rather than risk their whole position, or who could not conscientiously go the whole way with the revolution, were crushed in the conflict between Dutch Calvinism and Spanish Catholicism, two equally stubborn and equally narrow-minded factions. The outcome of the struggle was quite different from what any of the participants had expected. The Netherlands, instead of being reduced to a mere province of the Spanish Empire, of falling under the control of France or England, or of increasing the number of Protestant principalities within the German Empire, emerged from the struggle as an independent republic of great power, with a strong tradition of freedom and a firm belief in its own strength and ability to maintain itself among the great powers of Europe. In a single generation a group of shipowners and merchants of moderate wealth grew into a political power that seriously resented the slightest infringement of its sovereign rights by ancient and powerful monarchies.

The dramatic character of this struggle for freedom, its unexpected outcome, the liberalism of the principles proclaimed by its leaders, form such a marked contrast to the equally dramatic developments in Spain—the sudden decline of this great monarchy and the intolerant character of its ruler—that the Netherland revolt ranks as a classic episode in European history. Scores of Netherland writers have devoted many folio volumes to its description. Most renowned of these native historians was Hugo Grotius. Numbers of foreign writers too were attracted by the subject. Events in the Low Countries were followed with such passionate interest all over Europe that nearly eighty non-Dutch contemporary chroniclers are recorded. The eighty years’ war in the Low Countries left its trace in Spanish

literature as in Spanish historiography. Lope de Vega wrote a dramatic play on the siege of Maastricht (1579) and showed a more adventurous interest in the Low Countries by taking part in the expedition of the Invincible Armada. Calderon fought in the Spanish army besieging Breda and made the episode the subject of one of his plays.

Italian Humanists found in the Netherland revolt material and inspiration for imitations of Livy. German authors from Rostock to Basel, from Brunswick to Austria, chronicled events in the Low Countries in the style of modern reporters. Jacques Auguste De Thou was the most prominent of the French historians on the subject. The English contributed less to the historiography of the revolt, perhaps because the intellectual elite in England was satisfied with the Latin and French versions of the story. But that the Netherland leaders attached great importance to the English people's being well informed, is born out by the fact that they had all of their principal political pamphlets translated into English and circulated in the British Isles. It was no mere exaggeration on the part of the Dutch chronicler Reynders to write that even "Turks and Moscovites followed the events in the Low Countries with divided interest."

What was a stirring dramatic episode for contemporaries, became a glorious historical inspiration for future generations who saw in the war between the Spaniards and the *Gueus* a conflict between tyranny and freedom. The Netherlands were represented as the traditional battlefield of the forces of light and darkness, of liberty and oppression, of despotism and humanity. Friedrich von Schiller grasped the dramatic possibilities of the subject in his *Egmont*. He began writing the history of the revolt as the story of a people not born for heroism but magically lifted above their natural selves by the inspiring ideal of freedom. Little fitted for assiduous historical research, he dropped the subject after merely touching upon its beginnings. The same idealistic version of the war, in this case based upon a deep respect for the inherent freedom-loving qualities of the Netherland people, was expressed by the Bostonian John Lothrop Motley, undoubtedly one of the greatest advocates the Netherlands ever had.

In his *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Motley had left a vivid, sometimes fierce account of the outbreak and the progress of the revolt. His book is an expert English paraphrase of the XVIIth century Netherland version of the history of the revolution, with masses of new material added from European archives. He shares the partisan viewpoint of most of his early Dutch sources and at times exceeds them in partiality, for his XIXth-century liberalism is even more foreign to Spanish ideals and methods than was their XVIIth century Calvinism. Motley's book, though superseded in numerous details by later research and no longer acceptable as an inter-

pretation of the facts, gives a good account of the outward progress of events, and the excellence of its style makes any attempt at improvement hazardous. That more stress may be laid upon interpretation in the light of recent investigations, a summary of the principal occurrences will here suffice.

Philip II, king of Spain, was the fourth prince of that name in the Netherlands, belonging to the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty. He was born in Valladolid and educated in Spain where he learned to esteem Spanish ideals and the Spanish way of life above all others and became intransigent towards foreign ideas. Even had he been willing to respect the rights and customs of his non-Spanish subjects, he was unable to understand what their national habits and institutions meant to them. Philip has been described as one of the most sinister characters that ever ruled a monarchy, but modern research and more impartial appraisal have, so to speak, rendered him to humanity. He was definitely no more cruel than many of his contemporaries, let alone earlier and later despots and party leaders. From birth he was associated with trends and policies that mankind was just learning to abhor. Many a year passed however, before the Spanish methods of Philip's day were generally recognized as wrong. That came in the late nineteenth century, and since, Philip's memory was generally loathed.

Philip's administration and policy presented two marked characteristics. One of these, difficult for us to understand, was generally accepted in his time; the other, easy enough for us to understand, was somewhat unintelligible to his contemporaries. The latter was his firm belief in bureaucratic methods, his dislike for oral discussion, his reluctance to leave the handling of all details to his officials. He was a fanatic for files and memoranda, three hundred years before the typewriter and the telegraph. This technique of written administration, destructive of all personal contacts, was perhaps more irritating to the higher aristocracy of his state than his claim to absolute monarchy. The haughty nobles of the higher aristocracy, who persisted in believing themselves the king's peers, were already romantics clinging to the past. They might have been satisfied if only appearances had been kept up, if the writing desk had not been so conspicuously substituted for the conference table.

The other characteristic of Philip's rule was the constant and complete intermingling of religious and political affairs. In his mind apparently the Spanish monarchy as well as the Catholic Church represented Absolute Truth. They were not two but one. His view being the true one, there could be no other truth and no other possible policy than his own. And so he never hesitated to use the Church for political purposes any more than

the kingdom of Spain for the defense of the Church. However, being king of Spain before being protector of the Church, he had to strengthen the monarchy before the Church could be defended. To some extent this explains his often apparently hypocritical policy. Self-evident as this policy may have been to the king, it was certainly obscure to every one else from his Protestant enemies to the Pope himself.

With his kingdoms, Philip inherited a war. French armies were threatening the southern frontier of the Low Countries. In two battles, in which Philip's Spanish and Lowland forces fought loyally side by side, France was defeated. The ensuing treaty of peace of 1559 relieved Philip of a heavy burden. The war had strained his financial resources to the breaking point and had kept him in Brussels when he longed to return to Spain. He could not leave, however, before obtaining additional financial support from his provinces in the Low Countries. The negotiations for these subsidies gave the king a foretaste of what was to come. The States General, convened first at Valenciennes then at Brussels, agreed to disburse after the usual tergiversations and remonstrances but only if the money thus provided were considered public funds and not royal property. In token of this, its administration was to remain in the hands of a committee of the States.

This was the first clash between two wholly opposed conceptions of government of the Low Countries. Basically the question was whether the provinces would be self-governing in the fullest sense of the word, or accept the leadership of the monarch? Even if the royal leadership respected all institutions and privileges not wholly incompatible with the general aims of monarchical policy, it would still be unacceptable to the provinces unless those general aims concurred with their own. This meant that the Low Countries, in the opinion of the States, ought to be allowed to follow their own foreign policy within the Spanish empire and to handle internal problems according to their own national wishes. Fundamentally this was the same desire for neutrality in European politics as had been first expressed in the county of Flanders in 1340.

In Philip's war against France, Holland and Zeeland had been left to their own devices to resist French privateering against their merchant and fishing fleets. The interests of the country as a whole demanded a policy of friendship with England regardless of the personal feelings of King Philip, widower of Queen Mary Tudor and rejected suitor-for-political-reasons of Elizabeth. The expanding maritime interests of Holland and the trade of Antwerp could not afford to be subjected to the attacks of English privateers every time King Philip chose to disagree with his selfwilled sister-in-law. Moreover the northeastern provinces, which had reluctantly

recognized Philip's father as their territorial lord, could find no mention in the treaties of recognition of using their money and blood to protect His Majesty's Italian possessions against the ambitions of the king of France.

Philip temporized. If he could but obtain the much needed funds, he might disregard further complaints of his subjects. But his subjects insisted that their complaints be heard and decided to prescribe the use of the subsidies just granted and how the defense of the country should be organized. They resolved never to bear the cost of wars for the protection of other parts of the Spanish empire. Then they advanced their views on the attitude to be taken towards encroachments by the State-controlled Inquisition on the judicial prerogatives of the provinces.

All this was radically repugnant to Philip's conceptions of his monarchical power and of his duties as a Catholic prince. He seems to have believed that if he won over the higher aristocracy by generosity and flattered the people by display of clemency, he might gain support that would enable him to strike, as soon as peace was concluded, against the recalcitrant gentry and ruling burgher class. Heavy taxation followed the granting of the new subsidies, but various members of the higher aristocracy were exonerated and even had former tax payments refunded. To appease the people of Antwerp, the intransigent foe of heresy went so far as to restore five Antwerp Protestants to liberty. And yet, when Philip left the Netherlands, he found himself in the almost complete disagreement with both the aristocracy and the States. In vain had he bestowed upon individual members of the aristocracy high honors, large money-grants, great offices in the Council of State, governorships of provinces, even commands over Spanish regiments. As a class the aristocracy refused to yield to his blandishments. Individually they accepted the appointments and the honors, all except the command over Spanish troops. As a class they wanted to know what their real influence in the government would be. The States General, when the king took leave of them, emphasized this attitude, demanding a national government, a national army, a national policy. As Philip prepared to leave for Spain, no specific cleavage existed, only deep discord. Before the king had actually sailed from Flushing, a conflict arose.

Philip's conception of the relationship between Church and State, and the mutual assistance they should render each other in creating the ideal political and religious order, that he believed the only true one, is nowhere more apparent than in his reorganization of the Catholic hierarchy in the Low Countries. In 1559, Philip obtained from Pope Paul IV a Papal decree under which the Low Countries, until then included in the archdioceses of Cologne and Rheims, were organized into the three new archdioceses of Cambrai, Malines and Utrecht and fifteen dioceses. The boundaries of the

combined archdioceses coincided with the political boundaries of the Burgundian Lowland State—except Luxemburg. This organization was never carried into full effect, but it did mark a decisive step in the formation of the Low Countries as an independent national unit in Europe. Henceforward all non-Netherland ecclesiastical influence, except that of Rome itself, disappeared from the northern Low Countries. Groningen no longer belonged to the diocese of Muenster, or Nijmegen to that of Cologne. The Netherlands had received a national ecclesiastical organization.

That aspect of the situation was of no interest to contemporary Netherlanders. They were far more concerned with other aspects of the Papal decree, which was virtually a concordat with the king. Besides the new territorial division, the decree provided that the nomination of the bishops would be subject to the king, and that the king provide emoluments for the new dignitaries. This he certainly would not do out of his own funds. The States of the provinces questioned the king's right to make such a covenant. Nothing of the kind had been foreseen in the "Contracts" by which the northeastern provinces acknowledged Charles V, and so those provinces held it to be illegal. Finally the decree called for the incorporation of some ancient monasteries into episcopal domain, thus making the bishops appointed by the king representatives of the monasteries and as such members of the States Assemblies. This was revolution from above. It directly attacked the independence of the States Assemblies. If this reorganization were carried out, the Netherland Church would become a state institution. In a most impolitic way, that showed how far Philip was from understanding the situation in the Low Countries, he emphasized the political aspect of this reorganization by appointing as archbishop of Malines and Primate of the Low Countries, the chief political advisor of the government, Antoine Perrenot, seigneur de Granvelle, former bishop of Arras, an ecclesiastic of worldly inclination.

A greater mistake Philip could hardly have made. Upon leaving for Spain he entrusted the administration of his northern European state to his sister Margareta, Duchess of Parma, and to the Council of State. Within this Council he appointed an inner council or "consulta" of three members, of which Granvelle was the absolute leader. He requested Granvelle to correspond with him directly, thus reducing the duchess of Parma without her knowledge to a secondary role. Although she was the nominal head of the government, decisions were to be discussed and prepared between her king and her prime minister. This same minister was also the head of the Church and was soon honored with the dignity of Cardinal. From Philip's point of view in which Church and State were one and incarnate in the person of the Spanish monarch, the appointment was ideal, for it expressed

his great principle of administration. From the Netherland point of view it was proof that the king would never recognize the multiplicity of forms in Lowland political life, and that the Church was not of God but of the world. Within a few years the antagonism between the king and his subjects became irreconcilable. Either the monarchical principle or the constitutional one must triumph.

In the first five years after Philip's departure the conflict took the form of a clash between Cardinal Granvelle and the aristocracy. Against the "prime minister" the seigneurs formed a "league" of mutual assistance. The form and character of the opposition reminds one of France, where exactly the same situation occurred in the late XVIth and again in the XVIIth century. Like the Condés and Bouillons in France, the Egmonts, Lalaings, Nassaus and their associates in the Low Countries, organized a "Fronde." The same causes produced the same reactions in France and in the Low Countries. In its reorganization King Philip's centralized monarchy in the Netherlands, built after the French model, had outdistanced France herself. The reactions that were to shake France in the XVIIth century revolutionized the Low Countries fifty years earlier.

The "Frondeurs" of Brussels showed the same lighthearted extravagance, the same impudent arrogance, the same love for a theatrical display of resentment as the French nobility were to show in their fight against Mazarin. Reveling with their friends and retainers from the lower gentry, they drank to the downfall of the cardinal and coined "bon mots" at his expense. They paid and protected the writers of libelous pamphlets in which the cardinal was mercilessly attacked. They did not trouble to disguise their political schemes and openly sought contact in Germany and France with nobles of the same class, presenting their struggle in the Low Countries as the common cause of the nobility against any restriction of their rights by monarchical power. While undermining the authority of the cardinal, they vigorously opposed all schemes to involve the Low Countries in the great political enterprises of the king. They prevented armed intervention in the French civil wars, which the king had commanded to be made by Lowland troops. Philip, lord of one of the richest countries of northern Europe, had to admit that its power, though legally his, could not be used to further his foreign policy.

In similar conflicts in France at a later date, Richelieu and Mazarin vanquished the aristocratic opposition with the support of their king. Granvelle's position was far more difficult. He received little sympathy from the duchess of Parma, and when she was won over by the opposition and persuaded that all difficulties would vanish if the cardinal were removed, even King Philip could no longer maintain his faithful and de-



voted minister. In 1564 the king asked him to go to Burgundy, and from there he was sent to Italy. His departure left the duchess of Parma, now the sole representative of the king, dependent on the powerful nobles who claimed to be the leaders of the nation and were now able to make good their promises.

The higher aristocracy, however, was by no means representative of the people. With few exceptions they were all Walloons. Not only were they ignorant of the mother tongue of the large majority of the people, but they sprang from social surroundings entirely different to those prevailing in the northern and western parts of the country. The Walloon nobles excelled in chivalry throughout the Middle Ages. They were hostile to France from whom they feared aggression, but even so they were saturated with the traditional ideals of western chivalry which found its models in France. They knew that they would have to reckon with the interests and wishes of the burgher class of the western provinces, but this did not mean that they respected its members or wanted to be associated with them. They were equally averse to associating with the gentry, whom they might employ as retainers but would not treat as equals. Of those who were not Walloons one, the count of Mansfelt, a German prince in the service of Brussels, had no strong convictions in Netherland politics. Another, Lord Brederode, might be considered a Hollander, although he was born in Brussels. A third non-Walloon member of the higher aristocracy was Lamoraal, count of Egmont, of great military fame and a descendant of one of the oldest families of Holland, but related to the Walloon nobility through his mother. Most of his estates were situated in the southern Low Countries, and his lieutenantship of Flanders linked him still closer to the South. The outstanding figure among the aristocrats was William of Nassau, prince of Orange, of Rhineland descent.

Born in 1533 at Dillenburg in the county of Nassau, the son of Count William and Juliana of Stolberg, he had been designated heir to all the Nassau estates in the Low Countries by his cousin René of Breda and Châlon, prince of Orange. The Nassaus had come to the Low Countries at the beginning of the XVth century when Engelbert I married the heiress of the House of Polanen, Lords of Breda. His grandson Engelbert II, the great friend of Maximilian, largely extended his estates through the benevolence of that prince and acquired the domains of Diest and Sichem in southern Brabant. He bequeathed his lands and titles to his nephew, Henry of Nassau, of the Rhineland branch of the family. The new Lord of Breda rose even higher in the favor of the Habsburg rulers than had his father. He represented the Habsburg interests at the meeting of the German electors in Frankfurt in 1519 to choose a successor to Emperor Maximilian. He was

Imperial ambassador to France and England and commander of the army that invaded France in 1536. He married the granddaughter of another famous commander of the Imperial troops, Philibert, count of Châlon and prince of Orange, who in 1527 under the command of the duke of Bourbon had stormed Rome and stabled his horses in the Sistine Chapel. Through this marriage the Nassaus acquired the principality of Orange in southern France, which gave them sovereign rank. Hendrik's son René, prince of Orange and Châlon, Lord of Breda and Diest, fought and died in the service of Charles V. He left all his estates to his eleven-year-old cousin William, the eldest son of the count of Nassau. As a member of the higher aristocracy of the Low Countries his further education was supervised by the duchess of Parma herself. His patrimony of many families was still further enlarged when young William married Anna of Buren, the daughter of one of the Emperor's most loyal generals. Through this marriage he obtained control over other large estates in Zeeland, Guelders, and Holland.

By 1550 William of Orange was the richest nobleman of the Low Countries. Favored by Charles V, he took part from his youth in all important political discussions. He commanded part of the cavalry at the battle of St. Quentin, and was among Philip's representatives who negotiated the treaty of Chateau-Cambrésis in 1558. The king honored him with the lieutenanship over Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, made him marquis of Antwerp and gave him a place on the Council of State. Royal grants of money and tax-exemptions somewhat relieved the prince's financial position, which in spite of his enormous income was strained by careless spending. In 1564 his household alone cost 44,000 pounds and 256 people were on his civil list for personal services. Though one of the youngest members of the higher aristocracy, the prince of Orange was its most prominent leader. He owed this position to exceptional intellectual ability, a quality only too rare among his class. The ousting of Granvelle from the Government of the Low Countries had been largely his work. His opponents nicknamed him "the Silent" meaning to convey that he did not speak his mind, but astutely concealed his real thoughts under pleasant and meaningless conversation.<sup>24</sup>

Leading the aristocracy in constructive work proved far more arduous than rallying them for opposition. The nobles knew approximately what they did *not* want to do, but were completely at a loss when obliged to formulate a constructive policy. They did not want the Inquisition or any religious persecutions. But they were helpless when confronted with the problem of maintaining order after Catholicism and Calvinism, equally unwilling to tolerate "heretic" beliefs, began their struggle for supremacy.

The nobles were willing to obey the king, but they wanted to rule alone. Inevitably the problem arose of what to do if the king disagreed with them? If they submitted, their independence was gone. If they disobeyed his orders, they must be willing to accept the ultimate consequences of their policy—revolt. Of all the aristocrats, Brederode alone never hesitated. Rough and adventurous, never favored by the king and so without any feeling of personal indebtedness towards him, he rejoiced at the idea of armed revolt in the "great tradition" of his ancestors who, anti-Burgundian since the earliest days of party strife in Holland, had fought with Jacqueline of Bavaria against Philip II of Burgundy, and with Philip of Cleve against Maximilian of Austria. Monarchical tradition prompted the Croys and the Lignes to side with the king as soon as they saw in what direction things were going. Egmont, always helpless in politics, refused either to desert the king or to follow him, thus forfeiting everyone's friendship. Amidst this hopeless division, the prince of Orange tried his best to preserve at least a semblance of unity.

Discontent was wide spread in the Low Countries, but there was only one strong and determined opposition group, the Calvinists who opposed the king on political as well as religious grounds. They had what neither the Lutherans nor the Anabaptists had, an organized church well disciplined in matters of doctrine and morals. Again and again their leaders in Geneva pressed upon them that they had to obey God rather than their prince, and laid down general rulings on the rights and duties of the people towards their secular lord, but leaving particular decisions to the consciences of individual congregations. Those rulings included the right to revolt whenever a prince persecuted the Church of God or oppressed his people, provided that not the people or private citizens but someone invested with legal authority took command. Calvinism gained strength rapidly in the southern Low Countries after coming out into the open in France, where it defied the royal authority under the illustrious leadership of the prince of Condé. In England the death of Queen Mary had left the crown to Elizabeth, who tolerated Calvinist refugees from the Low Countries, and even permitted them to practice their religion publicly. These events encouraged the secretly organized Calvinist churches at home, which with the help of returned exiles rapidly propagated the new creed. Once the Inquisition had been stopped, the breaking up of national religious unity could no longer be prevented except by the wholesale slaughter of dissenters.

The majority of the aristocracy still hesitated. Was religious tolerance to be introduced? The prince of Orange declared in the Council of State that an end should be made of "the arbitrariness with which kings determine

and direct the religious sentiments of their subjects," but the novelty of this idea shocked even his own colleagues and supporters. Exactly at this moment the Church of Rome further defined its dogma at the council of Trent. Evasion of the dogmatic issue was no longer possible. The introduction of the decrees of Trent was bound to sharpen the conflict in the Low Countries, and Philip ordered them applied. The aristocracy, enjoying the good things of this life too much to be bothered with problems of the life hereafter, failed to grasp the deadly seriousness of the two extreme points of view. By negotiating and compromising they hoped to find some way out of the dilemma. Perhaps permission to worship in their own way would satisfy the reformers; perhaps King Philip would be satisfied with an outward show of religious unity. In these vain hopes they deceived nobody but themselves.

The Council of State decided to send Egmont to Spain to place the views of the aristocracy before the king. This was a marvelous choice indeed. The conceited Egmont with his less than average political intelligence went as special ambassador for a group that had no clear-cut policy. While he traveled, feasted, visited the king in the Escorial, listened to the flattery of the Spanish grandees, every day more filled with pride, others acted. The Calvinist congregations, still hiding from the Inquisition, had managed to form a synod with a few executive officers. They indignantly rejected every compromise in religious matters, reasserting their dogmatic beliefs in the same way the Catholics had reasserted theirs by accepting the decrees of Trent. The policy of the prince of Orange, champion of tolerance, was too vague for them. The Calvinist congregations knew what they wanted and knew they would never obtain it from the king except by force. To gain their point they needed men of the sword. Calvinist leaders of the Walloon nobility approached Louis of Nassau, brother of the prince of Orange.

The prince, concerned by the pre-eminently Calvinistic character of the new agitation, advised moderation. Under his influence the leaders modified their program to make it acceptable to Catholics. In its new form it was circulated among the gentry of the Low Countries where it received enthusiastic support, nowhere more than in the northern coastlands, in Holland and Friesland. Thus the league, or "compromise" of the nobles came into being. On April 5, 1566, hundreds of its members marched in solemn procession through the streets of Brussels to the residence of the duchess of Parma to present a petition against the continuance of religious persecution. This most unusual political demonstration made an enormous impression on both government and the people. The army, the national cavalry militia, by hundreds of its members, was demonstrating against the administration. Actually this was the beginning of a revolt. The help-

less duchess of Parma, advised by the Council of State and the aristocracy, hesitated and finally refused to act either one way or the other. The *Ligue des seigneurs*, so harmoniously united in opposition, split immediately when the final issue of obedience or revolt was put squarely before them. Orange and a few of his friends knew full well that support of the gentry might involve them in armed resistance to the government, yet were willing to put loyalty to political principles above personal allegiance to the king and Church. Egmont and the majority of the aristocrats shrank from disobedience to the prince whom they as his vassals, had sworn to follow.

The helplessness of the government immediately brought the Calvinists into the open. All over the southern part of the Low Countries congregations held their meetings, usually outside the precincts of the towns. Large numbers of exiles returned, burning with resentment against the Spanish regime that had driven them from their homes. Funds, collected for seemingly innocent purposes, were really to enable Louis of Nassau to engage thousands of mercenary soldiers in Germany. The watchwords of revolution were coined. Staunch supporters of the regime had given the protesting nobles the name of *gucus*—beggars—not because they were in financial straits as has often been suggested, but because in the eyes of the conservatives, they had put themselves outside the pale "good society" by siding with trouble makers, outlaws and revolutionists, as today people who never dream of sharing their wealth with others are called "communists" by their opponents.<sup>25</sup>

The name was taken up by the opposition and *Vive le gucus* became its slogan. The "Songs of the Gucus" spread from town to town and some of them are still the national songs of the Netherlands. Political tension rose to such heights that the agitation could no longer be controlled. The prince of Orange, anxious to avoid an open revolt for which he felt the country was not prepared, rushed from one danger point to another, from the meetings of the gentry to the city of Antwerp seething with agitation, from conferences with the Calvinist leaders to the Council of State. He gave advice to the duchess of Parma and recruited troops against her all at the same time.

In distant Spain, King Philip, watching Netherland events closely, saw the mistake he had made in recalling Granvelle and leaving the administration to the aristocracy. He refused, however, to do what his father had done in a similar case—rush north and put an end to all uncertainty by personal intervention. He waited. He wanted the aristocracy to involve themselves deeper and deeper in political confusion, so that afterwards the retribution might be more thorough. He left the duchess of Parma in the most impossible position, without support and virtually without instruc-

tions. Then the fanaticism of some of the Calvinists suddenly brought all the plans and calculations of the opposition to nought and restored the authority of the regime. In August 1566, working people in western Flanders, inflamed by violent denunciations of the Church of Rome by Calvinist preachers, stormed the churches, breaking the images, destroying liturgic vestments, desecrating all that was sacred to Catholics. With the rapidity of lightning the movement spread northeastward until it reached Amsterdam and Groningen. For a moment the nation and the government were dumbfounded at the audacity of what was after all only a small minority. Realizing that in many towns the magistrates had tolerated if not encouraged the iconoclasts in their destructive work, that part of the militia was in sympathy with the Calvinists and on the verge of revolt, that many of the aristocrats were unwilling to take part in forcible repression, the duchess of Parma decided to grant freedom of worship to both Lutherans and Calvinists. Her concessions were answered by fresh demands. Her attempt to collect a small force caused the Calvinists to assemble a military force of their own, the command of which they entrusted to Brederode. Civil war was inevitable. When it broke out the hopeless weakness of the revolution was revealed in a few short weeks. It was now the duchess who could rally around herself all discontented elements: Catholics who saw that "tolerance" would mean subjugation by Protestants; members of the league of the nobles who mistrusted the leadership of Brederode and Louis of Nassau; aristocrats disgusted with Calvinist radicalism; even Lutherans who feared the intolerance of the Calvinists. Philip, deeply shocked by the outbreak of iconoclasm, provided the duchess with badly needed funds. On the side of the revolution leadership of unity, purpose, funds and troops were lacking. Brederode, more a braggart than a gentleman, proved a complete failure. Orange, seeing the revolutionary cause lost, tried to stop the revolt before it had really begun in the hope of saving thousands from the gallows and from exile. A few minor skirmishes and all was over. Hundreds of prisoners were hanged. Left without pay, most of the rebel soldiers had deserted before going into action. The revolt was crushed and, from all over the Low Countries, endless trains of horses and wagons carried the Calvinists into exile. With them went thousands of non-Calvinists, so deeply committed to the revolution that they dared not face the restored royal authority. With them went William of Orange.

The duchess of Parma had scored a complete success. The decrees against the Reformation were again enforced. It was now her task to pacify the country, re-establish confidence among the people, revive sentiments of loyalty towards the prince. But at that very moment King Philip ordered Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, duke of Alva, to lead a punitive expedition

against the Low Countries. Once more the king showed his complete lack of understanding of Lowland problems. He thought the Lowlanders sufficiently humbled for him to complete the task begun by his ancestors of the Burgundian dynasty—the establishment of a centralized monarchy over and above the local autonomies.

In the early fall of 1567, the duke of Alva, with over ten thousand Spanish and Italian soldiers, arrived in Brussels. His commission gave him the title of commander-in-chief of the royal troops in the Low Countries under the authority of the duchess of Parma. Actually it invested him with all the powers of government. The duchess, suspecting the real purpose of his coming and deeply offended that she, under whose leadership the revolt had been crushed, was now deprived of real authority instead of being rewarded for her success, resigned her high office. It was immediately taken over by Alva. The appointment of a Spaniard as governor of the Netherlands was unheard of. Never before had the government in Brussels been entrusted to anyone outside the Burgundian-Habsburg family. By giving it to a vassal, regardless of how prominent he might be among the Spanish aristocracy, Philip deliberately lowered the standing of the office and consequently the status of the Low Countries within his empire. Alva's task was to punish all rebels—the word to be taken in a very broad sense. He was to teach the higher aristocracy that the only reason they were permitted to enjoy wealth and influence was because they were expected to be meek and obedient servants of the royal will. He was to restore respect for the Church among all classes of society, and to teach all ecclesiastics that the king's policy and the interests of the Church were one and the same, that to oppose the former was to harm the latter. He was to reduce the States Assemblies to a secondary role by freeing the royal finances from their control and by garrisoning the principal towns. He was sent to prove to the people of the Low Countries that the only and inevitable cure for religious disturbances was royal and relentless tyranny in the French fashion tinged with Spanish fanaticism. For the people of the Lowlands, Madrid not Rome was to represent Catholicism. Philip haughtily refused to allow a representative of the Pope to enter Brussels, even under the severe supervision of Alva. Pope Pius V, instead of protesting against the overbearing attitude of the Spanish king, meekly applauded the arbitrary proceedings of the new governor, thus making worse the plight of freedom-loving Netherland Catholics.

The duke of Alva organized a new council, the *Conseil des troubles*, the Bloody Council, to serve as a special court before which anyone ever suspected of rebellion could be brought to trial. Nearly all the members of that court were natives of the Low Countries, who from conviction or

cowardice fully supported Alva's policy. Ordered to disregard all privileges and immunities, the new court by its first ruthless decisions caused a fresh exodus of Lowlanders to England and northern Germany. The counts of Egmont and Hoorne were the most illustrious among the thousands of its victims, and their case presents the most flagrant violation of law. Their trial and execution were carried out with complete disregard of their privileged status as knights of the Golden Fleece, which exempted them from all judicial power except that of their peers. The humiliation of the higher aristocracy was complete. The majority of its members humbly begged forgiveness for their past misdeeds. Brederode died in exile. Only the prince of Orange had both the will and the resources to continue the struggle against the monarchy, even after he had been deprived of all revenue from his Lowland estates. The humbling of the aristocracy was to be followed by the crushing of local autonomy.

Philip, with faith in Alva's ability, decided to capitalize on his momentary prestige. The States General would be summoned in ironical compliance with one of the principal demands of the opposition, but for no other purpose than to learn His Majesty's wishes in the matter of taxation. Then, after being forced to agree to the royal demands, they would be dismissed never to convene again. The model of the new law that included a sales tax, was taken from Spain. The "tenth" and "twentieth" pennies to be introduced in the Low Countries, were simply a Dutch version of the Spanish *alcabala*.

When the States General convened at Brussels on the twenty-first of March 1569, the people were cowed. Even when outside help was proffered, they dared not make use of it. In the summer and fall of 1568, William of Orange had invaded the Low Countries. By stretching his personal resources to the utmost and with the help of the French Huguenots and the Protestant princes of Germany, the prince had succeeded in gathering an imposing army, but that strong force had been badly handled. The invasion of the Low Countries was planned from three points at the same time, the heaviest blow to be dealt at the center with Brussels and Antwerp as its direct objectives. But each force acted separately and Alva defeated the Huguenots in the south and Louis of Nassau in the northeast before William ever took the field. Then by outmaneuvering the prince of Orange, Alva prevented him from occupying a single town of importance and left him no chance to win over the Netherlands by a successful engagement. The soldiers of the prince dispersed, but their captains followed him from Brabant to Lorraine and Strassbourg, demanding repayment of their expenditures. Ruined, despairing of his own and his country's future, William joined the armies of the Huguenots in France. The campaign was a



total failure but it gave the Netherland nation its national anthem. It was in 1568 that William's trumpeters sounded for the first time the *Wilhelmus* for which his faithful friend Marnix of St. Aldegonde had composed the text.

William of Orange had learned one important lesson. For his campaign he had appealed to the Protestant princes of Germany, presenting the cause of the Low Countries as that of Protestantism. Himself a prince of the Empire and married to a daughter of the Elector of Saxony, he regarded the Protestant German princes as the natural defenders of local religious and political autonomy against Catholic authoritarianism. Neither France nor England, he believed, could have the same interest in the preservation of Lowland liberties as the princes of the Empire. He knew the inclinations of Queen Elizabeth towards strong monarchical authority, and he distrusted the exclusively Calvinist opinions of the French Huguenots. The defenders of the *Religionsfrieden*, the religious peace of Augsburg concluded in 1555 in Germany, were in his opinion the natural protagonists of a regime of liberty and tolerance in the Low Countries. Through this policy the ties between the Lowlands and Germany which the Habsburg rulers had striven to cut completely, would be strengthened. In this the prince of Orange saw no danger. He was not working for the subordination of the Low Countries to Imperial authority, but rather for the extension to the Low Countries of liberties enjoyed in the Empire.

To his utter disappointment the Protestant princes refused to see the problem in the same light. From the moment they threw off Imperial supervision by the defeat of Charles V in 1555, they had considered themselves the equals of kings and emperors. Strengthened in their self-esteem by the Lutheran doctrine demanding submission of the individual to princely authority, they seriously objected to assisting "rebels against their lawful prince" as it pleased some of them to style the Lowland patriots. The only exception was the Palatine Elector, but he was a Calvinist and prompted by religious interest.

William of Orange strove desperately to prevent the Lowland revolution from becoming a partisan Calvinist affair. He realized that Calvinism was dreaded by all princes, Catholic and Lutheran, as an anti-monarchical movement which, as King Henry II of France once told him, sought to overthrow all monarchies and to establish republics on the Swiss model. But no choice seemed left. The Lutheran princes of Germany were too "isolationist" to recognize the danger that threatened them if King Philip succeeded in making of the Low Countries a bulwark of Catholic authoritarianism. The Huguenots of France understood the situation better, and Alva assisted in their enlightenment by sending troops to the support

of the Queen Regent of France in her war against the Protestant faction.

Returning from France, the prince of Orange wandered through Germany, often obliged to hide from his creditors, but always in touch with the exiles from the Low Countries and with the last remnants of opposition within the country. All he could do was to create some order and give an appearance of regularity to the piratical enterprises of the "Beggars of the Sea." These were a group of nobles and merchants who, with hundreds of exiles from the Low Countries and adventurers from anywhere, had equipped a number of small vessels with which they waged a privateer campaign against King Philip and anyone loyal to him who traded with his lands. This was broad enough to include most other ships that sailed the northern seas, and the Sea Beggars were impartial indeed in their attacks on merchant shipping. They were allies of doubtful value to the prince of Orange and the national cause, unless some sort of order could be established among them, and their "military tactics" brought in line with the general policy of the prince.

The duke of Alva might well feel confident of having overcome the principal obstacle to the organization of an authoritarian regime in the Low Countries. He summoned the States General, advised them of the royal demands for taxation, left them no opportunity to discuss his proposals and compelled their acceptance. Recalcitrant towns were punished by quartering Spanish soldiers in the homes of the citizens. For two years Alva accepted a yearly contribution of two million guilders in lieu of the new taxes, but in 1571 he decided that the time had come to enforce the new law ruthlessly. By that time he had become the most hated man the Netherlands had ever known in their history. The Spanish regime had reunited the national opposition that had been broken in 1566 by the intemperate action of the Calvinists, no mean accomplishment. The iconoclasts had brought the religious issue to the fore and thus prevented a common front of Catholics and Protestants against the authoritarian regime. Alva, by directing his attacks against the ancient institutions of the country, forced all defenders of those ancient rights, whether Protestant or Catholic, to unite regardless of the risk involved for their individual Church. Hatred of the duke, "the tyrant," was general. But from where was help to come?

William of Orange, completely ruined by his disastrous expedition of 1568, had no hope but in France. The purpose of Alva's regime was to make the Low Countries into a bulwark of Spanish power. France was now surrounded by Spanish bastions—in Italy, in Burgundy, in Flanders. The king of France could not tolerate such encirclement of his territory, and sooner or later the traditional conflict between the Houses of Valois and Habsburg was bound to break out again. The moment seemed near in

1571. Admiral de Coligny, the leader of the Huguenots, had gained the confidence of King Charles IX and was inciting that young monarch to war with Spain. Louis of Nassau, brother of William of Orange, was in close touch with Coligny and through this connection sought to make the coming war a campaign for the liberation of the Low Countries. He himself with a number of volunteers was to form the vanguard of the invading force. Coligny and perhaps even the king would follow with the royal army, strengthened by the dashing cavalry regiments of the Huguenot nobility. Orange, at the head of an army recruited in Germany with the support of Netherland exiles and French sympathizers, was to invade the Lowlands from the east, while revolt in the Low Countries would break the backbone of Alva's defense. The revolt proved a success, but the other plans came to naught. They merely diverted Alva from throwing all his forces against the rebels without delay and crushing them before they could consolidate their positions.

On April 1, 1572, a squadron of the "Sea Beggars" fleet appeared at the mouth of the Meuse, near Brill and finding the town ungarrisoned, they captured it. The western coastlands were only thinly occupied, for Alva had withdrawn nearly all his forces to bolster the defense of the southern frontier against French attacks. Too late he realized that leaving the Scheldt, Meuse and Zuiderzee ports unprotected, presented a far greater danger than the evacuation of a few inland fortresses in the south. Troops hurriedly dispatched to occupy Flushing and to keep open the Scheldt and the port of Antwerp arrived too late. The town had gone over to the revolution. A few Spanish companies could have prevented this loss, which in the years to come proved disastrous to the Spanish cause. Alva had no opportunity to retrieve it. Louis of Nassau had crossed the French-Lowland boundary and occupied the town of Mons. The vanguard of the invaders was there, the main armies, more than twenty thousand soldiers under the prince of Orange and a stronger force under Coligny, were to follow. But the ill-paid forces of the prince were unwieldy and difficult to handle. The French army never came. With a single stroke the pro-Spanish faction in France, headed by Guise and supported by Catherine de' Medici, mother of the king, relieved Alva of his worries. Coligny was murdered, the French troops disbanded, Louis of Nassau left to his fate and the prince of Orange obliged to retreat and seek refuge among the rebels of Holland.

The revolution had spread rapidly. Enkhuizen, at the entrance of the Zuiderzee, had followed the example of Flushing. Then, by persuasion or by the joint force of the Sea Beggars outside the walls and their sympathizers within, nearly all the towns of Holland and Zeeland were won over. Middelburg was held for Spain by its garrison; Amsterdam, by the

*stadhouder* of Holland with the help of the ruling oligarchy. Most of the towns of Friesland and Overijssel and many in Guelders and Utrecht followed the lead of Holland. A large part of the Netherlands had fallen to the rebels before Alva could turn his attention from the southern frontier. But the revolution appeared more formidable than it really was. The Sea Beggars, partisans rather than patriots, had committed such cruelties that with the spreading of the revolt hundreds of Catholics fled into exile. The defense works of the towns were weak, merely medieval stone walls, unable to withstand bombardment by Spanish artillery. There were few professional soldiers, and the military value of the city guards was dubious. Finally, there were no funds and no administration to collect such funds. This last defect had to be remedied first. The towns of Holland and Zeeland were found willing to recognize the prince of Orange as their leader. The Sea Beggars occupied the country in his name. The town councils gave William's authority a mask of legality by ignoring the fact that he had resigned as lieutenant of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, and by declaring him King Philip's lieutenant in His Majesty's absence to resist the duke of Alva, who was supposed to have abused the royal confidence. Through this fiction the Hollanders sought to quiet their own conscientious scruples and to avoid appearing as rebels against their legitimate prince. Avowed rebels might not have been able to obtain any support from foreign princes who were all very sensitive on this point. Besides the councils were most anxious to discredit the rumor that the triumph of Calvinism would mean the establishment of a Swiss republican form of government.

The representatives of the towns of Holland who on July 19, 1572, met at Dordrecht with the delegates of the prince and the Sea Beggars, reconstituted the Government of Holland. The prince of Orange was chosen as its head, but being wholly without resources of his own, his relation to the States Assembly naturally became that of a prime minister dependent upon the support of a representative body. In theory, the prince, while not possessing sovereignty, represented it; in practice, the powers of sovereignty lay from then on in the hands of the States.

This weak rebel organization had to meet the onslaught of Alva's military power. Once the danger from France had passed, the duke of Alva regrouped his army and sent a strong force northward. The riverbelt in the middle of the country made an invasion from the south difficult. So the Spaniards first moved northeast, crossed the Rhine near the confluence at Lobith, and then invaded the area in revolt from the east. The story of this invasion has been described many times. Zutphen was stormed and its citizens cruelly massacred. The other IJssel-towns meekly submitted. Part of the Spanish army marched north to Friesland and reoccupied most of the

position lost to the rebels. The main force marched west, destroyed Naarden, after dreadful scenes of murder and looting, and made its headquarters in Amsterdam which had been held for the loyalists by the desperate efforts of its ruling oligarchy. Haarlem might have surrendered had it not been for the determination of the prince of Orange and the garrison. The Spanish commander, Alva's son, Don Fadrique, after a moment of hesitation, decided to storm the walls. This was the decisive moment of the revolt. Until then the Spanish troops had been a police force on a ruthless punitive expedition; until then the people of the Netherlands had not stood up and fought the king's professional soldiery, arms in hand. More than fifty years later the Netherland historian Hooft wrote: "The Netherlanders are slow by nature and think twice before they act. But once their patience is exhausted, especially if their liberty is being curtailed, no power on earth can hold them back. They will fight with complete disregard of danger or the superiority of the enemy." The same view inspired Schiller's sour remark in his history of the Netherland revolt: "No people is less predisposed to heroism, but circumstances made the Netherlanders heroic." By ordering an improvised attack on Haarlem, Don Fadrique took a grave risk. Had his more experienced father been present, the mistake might have been avoided and Holland reconquered for King Philip. The storm troops were beaten back, not once but several times. The artisans, shopkeepers and clerks of Haarlem were filled with confidence and pride at having found themselves the equals of Europe's best professional fighters. The same pride and confidence filled the hearts of all who fought for the revolution, and inevitably led to an overestimation of their own strength. The small armies of volunteers and Sea Beggars that sought to relieve Haarlem learned to their cost that fighting Alva's troops in the open was a different matter from beating back their attacks from the city walls. The capture of Haarlem took the Spaniards seven months, and its heroic defense raised the hopes of the rebels as much as it depressed the Spanish soldiery.

From Haarlem, Don Fadrique decided to march against northern Holland to open the trade routes of Amsterdam. A naval force, collected in that port was to clear the Zuiderzee of the Sea Beggars. The defeat of that naval force saved northern Holland and the revolution, for it gave the rebels mastery of the sea and of river estuaries, without which Holland and Zeeland could be neither defended nor conquered. Control of the coastal waters provided the revolution with a new source of income—duties on trade with enemy-occupied lands. No ships were allowed to sail to Antwerp or Amsterdam without paying tolls to the revolutionary government, and many ship-captains drew the obvious conclusion that it might pay

them to transfer their trade to the rebel towns. The Spanish attacks were by no means ended. King Philip decided upon a change of leadership in the Low Countries and recalled Alva, whose failure had become conspicuous, sending in his place Don Louis de Zuniga y Requesens, former governor of Milan, who was supposed to be a naval expert. This carried considerable weight in his appointment, as Philip now saw that naval forces would be more important than land forces in the reduction of the rebellious provinces. At the same time, Requesens was more likely to achieve reconciliation than had been Alva's strictly military mind. Philip planned to split the opposition, to lure the Catholics back to the royal side by promises of pardon and respect for national liberties, to leave the Calvinists in a helpless minority. He might have succeeded had he come in person. Instead he instructed Requesens to follow a policy of half-hearted concessions which failed completely because of the deep mistrust of all Netherlanders for everything Spanish.

At first Requesens was quite successful. A severe blockade brought the towns of southern Holland to the verge of collapse. Leiden was besieged, while Delft, Gouda, and Rotterdam were virtually cut off from each other. The countryside was at the mercy of the Spaniards. The position of the rebels seemed hopeless. Everything depended upon a few towns. Among the city oligarchs there were always some willing to restore their allegiance to the king if political liberty was assured. When Leiden was besieged, and the States of Holland met at Rotterdam, all precedent was broken by admitting the representatives of the city guards and guilds. The prince of Orange knew that in grave crises, the mass of the people are more to be relied upon than the ruling classes, and he had often insisted on having important ordinances approved by the people as well as by the magistrates. In his desperate attempt to save Leiden, he asked his brother Louis of Nassau to organize another army of German mercenaries and to invade the Netherlands from the east. Again the leaders of the revolt made the mistake of directing their attack against Brabant instead of reinforcing their positions in Holland. Louis of Nassau did not even succeed in crossing the Meuse, and he lost his life and the battle at Mook in April 1574. The revolution seemed doomed. The Sea Beggars had been driven from Friesland. They were losing ground in northern Holland, and their commander vented his rage on the Catholic peasants, thus creating a new danger by destroying all sympathy for the revolution among large masses of the population. Further to the south the Spaniards held Leiden besieged until October 3, 1574, when the countryside was flooded by order of the prince, and they had to abandon their positions. At this, one of the darkest moments in the history of Holland, the University of Leiden was founded in

recognition of the heroic resistance of the citizens and as a token of confidence in the future.

The Spanish withdrawal from Leiden was more a moral than a military victory for the rebels, as only a few months later the Spaniards renewed their attacks and conquered a number of small towns in eastern Holland. The real victories of the rebels were won in Zeeland. Requesens, sent to the Low Countries because of his knowledge of naval affairs, had succeeded in arming a number of ships in Antwerp, only to see his squadron utterly destroyed in a furious battle in the Eastern Scheldt. Thereupon Middelburg, which had been valiantly defended against the Sea Beggars for two years, surrendered and joined the revolution. Zeeland, unassailable amidst wide inlets of the sea, was the bastion of the patriots. Their small and easily handled ships controlled the estuaries of the Scheldt where a knowledge of local geography and good seamanship enabled their naval commanders to outmaneuver any Spanish force. Then Requesens decided to show the Beggars of the Sea that even an island could be conquered by the Spanish army without naval support. He ordered General Mondragon to conduct his troops at night and through shallow water to the island of Schouwen Duiveland. This audacious enterprise succeeded. The town of Zierikzee was taken after a six months siege. Its fall separated Zeeland from Holland, but by the time of its capitulation in June 1576, the whole situation had changed, and the revolution was victorious.

The Spanish position in the Low Countries collapsed suddenly, of itself, as if from over-strain. Events justified the advisors of King Philip who had recommended total withdrawal from the Low Countries rather than a costly war for the maintenance of royal authority. The northern outpost of the Spanish empire was absorbing too large a part of the Spanish forces, while adding nothing to the strength of Spain's political position. Spain, the greatest naval power in the Mediterranean, was losing all prestige in northern Europe through her inability to destroy a few hundred rebel vessels. Instead of defending the coast of Italy or the Spanish strongholds in North Africa against the Moors, her army exhausted itself in the cold marshy lands of the north. The result was that both the African fortresses and the Low Countries were lost for King Philip. Gold and silver from the New World merely passed through Spain to fill the coffers of bankers who, at exorbitant rates of interest, provided funds for the Lowland campaign. A delay in the arrival of the "silver fleet" or any disruption of the complicated Spanish political machine, and King Philip would face loss of credit and increasing financial difficulties in the future.

Requesens, obliged to summon the States General in May 1574, met with general stubborn resistance to the continuation of the war. The Wal-

loon provinces finally granted money, but the others demanded that negotiations should first be attempted for the reconciliation of Holland and Zeeland. Requesens reluctantly consented. This concession, a sign of weakness on his part, gave the rebels some legal standing, an important fact of which the genius of Orange took every possible advantage. His position further improved when negotiations were started in Breda under the auspices of the Emperor. This alone shows how much prestige Philip had lost. While formerly he had ignored all ties with the Empire, he was now obliged to accept the mediation of his overlord in a conflict with his own subjects. The negotiations broke down over the future religious status of the Low Countries. Philip maintained that he alone was to decide and that his mercy could never go farther than granting heretics leave to depart from his territories and take their possessions with them. Holland and Zeeland, led by the prince of Orange, demanded that the question of religion be settled by the States General, by the people of the Low Countries themselves. Philip could never accept this point of view, nor could he enforce his own.

The success of Requesens' army in Holland and Zeeland was dearly bought but, instead of concentrating his war effort on Holland, Philip became increasingly ambitious. This brought about the collapse of the Spanish military position in the Low Countries. It came suddenly in 1576. Requesens fell dead at a time when there was not a penny in the treasury. With some hesitation the Council of State took up the reins of government until the king should send a new governor. The Spanish commanders showed little respect for the interim administration. The Spanish soldiery revolted against their commanders, resolved to get their overdue pay in one way or another. Towns were occupied and plundered by the troops, Antwerp suffering worst of all. A revolution in Brussels, prearranged by the prince of Orange, deprived the Council of State of its liberty and forced a convocation of the States General. The atrocities committed by the Spaniards in Antwerp drove the States General, representing the southern provinces, into alliance with Holland and Zeeland. At Ghent on November 8, 1576, the States of all the provinces concluded the agreement, known as the "Pacification." This treaty provided that all the provinces would join in the ejection of Spanish troops and that all matters of general interest (among them religion) would be settled by a meeting of the States General to convene as soon as peace and order were restored. The Low Countries were now united against Spain.

During the ensuing three years, the struggle was concentrated in the southern provinces. King Philip sent his half-brother, Don Juan of Austria, as Governor; but this young prince felt helplessly out of place amidst the



political complications of the Low Countries. These three years gave Holland and Zeeland the necessary respite to reorganize their administration, to restore their economy, and finally to recover the towns conquered or never given up by the enemy. Haarlem returned to the side of the rebels and finally Amsterdam itself admitted the troops of the prince of Orange.

In these years the prince could turn his attention to the south. For him the revolution could never be subordinated to provincial considerations. To succeed and have lasting results it must be made national. On this point the States of Holland and Zeeland were far from agreement with their leader. The particularism of the Hollanders and Zeelanders had grown to such an extent in the four years they had fought the enemy alone, that a permanent union even of the two provinces appeared obnoxious to both of them. The States, now completely dominated by the magistrates of the cities and therefore by commercial and shipping interests, were unwilling to sacrifice any of the advantages they enjoyed from their naval control over all Lowland waters. They needed the cooperation of the other provinces in pushing the Spaniards so far back that all danger to Holland and Zeeland would be eliminated, but they would not accept the supremacy or even tolerate the influence of any other province. The prince of Orange did not care which of the seventeen provinces predominated in the federation or where the central administration was established. Tradition made it difficult for him to conceive of any other city than Brussels as the center of government, or even of a purely Dutch administration to replace the old French-Burgundian system.

The States of Holland held different views. They trusted far more in their own strength than in federation and were decidedly averse to receiving orders again from Brussels. Religious divergence further widened the cleavage. In the agreement of Ghent the southern provinces explicitly stated that no religion except that of Rome would be publicly proffered in their territory where, however, the persecution of dissenters was to cease. Holland and Zeeland, while reserving their decision in this matter, continued to give Calvinism a free hand in the gradual suppression of the Catholic Church. It shows the greatness of William of Orange that he was one of the few who realized from the first that this vague temporary agreement would lead to a religious conflict unless some policy of mutual tolerance could be introduced and maintained.

On his return to Brussels after ten years' absence, the prince was met by members of the aristocracy, men of his own class and his former comrades in the service of the king and in opposition to Granvelle. At the outset it was apparent that he was no longer one of them and that they could not or would not understand or follow him. In those ten years the prince had

found the common man of more help in his struggle for freedom than the aristocrat. He had passed through years of penury, if not poverty; his habits had become simple compared with his previous luxury. He had mixed with merchants and sea captains, instead of restricting his society to the mighty and had lost his taste for the fashionable life of Brussels. Probably he had also lost caste with his former comrades. During the hard years of desperate resistance, his religious convictions had deepened and although by no means a fanatic, he had become a convinced Calvinist. This widened the gulf that separated him from the Catholic aristocracy. On the other hand, he had become a statesman of international fame and had risen far above the level of the "frondeur" of 1563, the aristocratic party leader who claimed to speak for the people without knowing them. When the aristocracy discovered how high William stood in the opinion of the people, that he alone was the trusted advisor of the States General, they turned against his influence and organized a "Fronde," like the one he and they had once organized against Granvelle. They induced Matthias of Austria, cousin of King Philip, to assume the governorship of the Low Countries in the name of the States General.

The intrigues of the aristocracy, although troublesome, were among the lesser worries of the prince. His most difficult task was to keep the provinces united against Spain. That unity was threatened, not only by the intrigues of Spaniards who sought to win the Low Countries back for their king, but even more by the imminence of civil war between Calvinists and Catholics. The treaty of Ghent was acceptable to King Philip except as regards religion, and it remained to be seen whether the States General—in which the southern Catholic provinces held a majority—would remain steadfast for the sake of the Calvinists in Holland and Zeeland, if their own political demands were granted. As a matter of fact, the States General, against the wishes of Holland and Zeeland, agreed to accept Don Juan as Governor on condition that he would immediately withdraw the Spanish soldiery and respect the liberties of towns and provinces. Restoration of religious unity in all the provinces—including the now Calvinist ones—though postponed for the moment, was agreed to by both sides. Only Don Juan's impatience to regain real authority saved the situation for the prince of Orange and again put the whole of the Low Countries on their guard against Spanish "perfidy." Having strengthened anti-Spanish sentiment in the southern provinces, the prince of Orange sought to secure further internal unity, but the religious problem stood in his way. With the growth of anti-Spanish feeling, anti-Catholic trends also rose rapidly. In Holland and Zeeland, Catholics had submitted to violation of their rights when their liberties were in extreme danger from Spain. There,

the Calvinists had gained easy supremacy by exploiting the religious indifference of large numbers of Catholics and the anti-Spanish sentiments of the masses. This led them to believe that revolt against Spain would also bring about an acceptance of Calvinism by the South. But the southerners did not see things in that light. Feeling strong and united in their opposition to Spain, they did not want Calvinist soldiery in their towns for whenever troops or adherents of the prince came to the South from Holland, they brought religious conflict with them. The leading classes of the South, in their opposition to Calvinism easily confused the cause of liberty and of the prince with religious persecution, and this drove them back into the Spanish ranks.

One thing stands out from the confused history of the crucial years between 1576 and 1579. Wherever the mass of the people, represented by the guilds and city guards, obtained the upper hand, the revolution continued even at the cost of Catholicism. It was *not* that the masses everywhere were strongly inclined towards Calvinism, for the devout Calvinists always remained in the minority, just as were militant Catholics. The small burgher class cherished their political freedom more than their religion. They were generally willing to fight for the former, but seldom for the latter. Once forced to submit to Spain again, the masses found little difficulty in readjusting their religious convictions to the teachings of the Catholic Church; but as long as the revolution lasted, they were willing to follow its more forceful protagonists, the Calvinists. But wherever the city oligarchs and the higher aristocracy maintained their authority, the prince of Parma who in 1578 had succeeded Don Juan, was sure to find a more sympathetic audience than the prince of Orange. Vested interests in the Church and in secular society turned back to Spain when they saw their authority diminish in proportion to the progress of the revolution. Personal feelings or family connections did not weigh heavily once the very existence of a class seemed threatened. By 1579, the names of Egmont and Lalaing, sons and relatives of Alva's victims, were again to be found among the loyal defenders of Spanish authority. The Walloon provinces, less antagonistic to Spain than the Dutch speaking majority, made their peace with the king in 1579. In vain had the prince of Orange tried to induce Calvinists and Catholics to live together by promulgating a decree of religious tolerance. It was nowhere accepted or even put into force; neither by the Calvinists of Holland and Zeeland nor by the Catholics of the Walloon provinces. Religious strife became so violent and general that the union of the seventeen provinces was rapidly falling apart, and some provinces like Flanders seemed almost on the verge of disintegrating into their component parts.

Leaving the internal forces of destruction to do their work in the Low

Countries, Parma, with a strongly reinforced royalist army, concentrated on the siege of Maastricht which he stormed and sacked in 1579. His policy of reconciliation promised to all who were willing to return to allegiance to the king, full liberty according to ancient custom. He was wise enough to adhere strictly to his promises, even when their execution caused him serious difficulties in the prosecution of the war. The prince of Orange, feeling his hold on the southern provinces slipping, sought to safeguard at least Holland and Zeeland by bringing the adjoining provinces, especially those north of the riverbelt, into closer contact with the center of the revolution. He tried to create a stronghold within the Low Countries, in the strategically located northern provinces. This was the origin of the famous Union of Utrecht. It was a weak beginning indeed. When the Union was signed at Utrecht on January 23, 1579, only the representatives of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, the Ommelanden of Groningen, and William's brother, John of Nassau in his capacity of lieutenant of Guelderland, put their names to the document. Friesland, Overijssel, Drente, and the States of Guelderland proclaimed their adherence. Fear of Calvinist domination held some of them back for several months, others hesitated for fear of losing even the smallest part of their provincial autonomy.

For fifty years the northern provinces had been kept together in a personal union under the Habsburg dynasty, and with that bond broken it was difficult to substitute a new unifying factor. The only one the founders of the union conceived as workable was negative—common resistance against foreign attack. The means they devised for even this limited end, such as a common system of taxation, could never be put into practice. The Union as concluded at Utrecht did not replace the previously existing central administration, but left merely a vacuum in its place, a deficiency that was to have its effects during the next two centuries. But then, the Union was not intended as a constitution. Its members still belonged to that larger, though badly impaired federation, the Seventeen Provinces of the Low Countries; and that federation sought desperately to create a new administration in the hope of preventing complete disintegration. Some of the Brabant and Flanders towns followed the example of the Walloons and returned to obedience to the king; others, determined to resist Spanish tyranny to the last sought admission to the Union.

In this hopeless situation, the States General led by the prince of Orange, finally decided to discard the fiction that they were still loyal subjects of his Spanish Majesty, resisting only his evil servants and soldiers. Holland and Zeeland had for some time given up all pretense of loyalty towards their former sovereign and urged the States General to do the same. By a decree of July 22, 1581, the States General demanded that all their officials and all

inhabitants of the provinces swear loyalty and obedience to the "United Low Countries" instead of to the king of Spain. Their resistance to the Spanish regime had become a formal revolt against the king himself. Before deserting their old sovereign, the States General elected a new one, Francis of Alençon, duke of Anjou, and brother of Henry III of France. The new prince, forced to accept the most stringent restrictions on his executive powers, had no sooner experienced this new type of constitutional government than he sought to overthrow it. The troops of the sovereign fought a brisk battle with his citizens in the streets of Antwerp, ending in the complete humiliation of the French prince. His death was a great relief to his new subjects who disliked his French origin anyway and despised his usurped tyranny even more than that of Philip.

The collapse of the central administration nearly caused the downfall of the new freedom. The cities of Brabant and Flanders, left to their fate, successively made their peace with the king or were conquered by the Spanish army which under Parma's leadership showed its traditional vigor and efficiency. Even the provinces of the Union of Utrecht were no longer safe. Discontented Catholics, incited by the forceful propagation of Calvinism, joined the enemy. Town after town and noble after noble made their peace with the king. The worst defection was that of the governor of Groningen, which caused the loss of half the northeastern provinces. Only Holland and Zeeland seemed to stand like rocks in the raging storm. But only outwardly. Enkhuizen, one of the first towns to join the revolution in 1572, ten years later was the scene of a pro-Spanish conspiracy, and similar disloyalty was noticeable in Amsterdam, Gouda, and even in Delft, the residence of the prince of Orange. In the South a number of cities still held out, but a common defense no longer existed. Holland and Zeeland, feeling safer in isolation than in alliance with uncertain friends, were on the point of raising the prince of Orange to sovereign rank, which would have meant separation from the main body of the Low Countries, when that great leader of the revolution fell a victim to Spanish terrorism. Outlawed by King Philip in 1580, he had been constantly exposed to attacks on his life. On July 10, 1584, Balthasar Gerard, a Burgundian, earned the promised blood money by shooting the prince in his home at Delft.

The cause of the Revolution seemed hopeless indeed. Its leader was dead, the union of the seventeen provinces broken, and the army disorganized. Philip was greatly strengthened by the acquisition of Portugal in 1580, which doubled his naval forces, and the Spanish king felt confident that after all his cause would triumph in the Netherlands and in the whole of northern Europe. One year after William's death, the duke of Parma scored his greatest victory by the conquest of Antwerp in spite of

desperate attempts on the part of Holland and Zeeland to save that all-important city.

At this moment, however, the struggle in the Netherlands became truly international. The German princes had proved unresponsive to all appeals from the Low Countries. The Emperor had restricted his interference to repeated mediations between the king and his former subjects. From the east nothing was to be expected. Germany herself, through the inaction of her leaders, and in spite of all the theories expounded at the Imperial Diets, ejected the Low Countries from her midst. In these very years, the Lowlanders had grown so foreign to the Germans that they were ousted by the latter from the old common pilgrim hostels in Rome. Conscious of their national individuality, Lowlanders registering in foreign universities no longer styled themselves natives of this or that town, but *Belgae*, meaning inhabitants of any part of the Low Countries. The States of Holland, when preparing to proclaim Prince William count of Holland, explicitly denied the overlordship of the Emperor. Long before 1648, the year of the official separation so often deplored by later German nationalist historians, the bond between the two territories was broken.

While Germany remained indifferent, France and England became more interested in the Lowland conflict, as their fear of Spanish dominion grew. In France, King Philip had now his partisans well organized in the *Ligue* under the leadership of the Guise family. Not only the Huguenots, but the royal authority itself was threatened by the powerful new organization. In England, Queen Elizabeth felt insecure as long as Mary Queen of Scots was alive and the center of continuous intrigues. Once already the rebels in the Netherlands had given her invaluable aid by forcing Don Juan of Austria, then governor of the Low Countries, to send his troops overland to Spain instead of permitting them to embark in a North Sea port for the invasion of England and the liberation of Mary Stuart. At that time, in 1577, the naval forces of Holland and Zeeland had kept the Scheldt tightly closed and prevented an attack on the British coast. Both France and England relied on the continuance of the Netherland revolution to safeguard their own independence. So far only a trickle of volunteers and an occasional grant of money had come from England, where Queen Elizabeth continued to practice a policy of appeasement. This was doomed to failure as King Philip did not trust her. In his opinion, she was a usurper and an apostate. The Pope had excommunicated her and Philip felt it his duty to lead a crusade for the restoration of legitimate authority and orthodoxy in the island kingdom. All this was evident to Queen Elizabeth, even before the prince of Orange died, but she had found him so strongly inclined towards France that cooperation had never been wholehearted.

After William's death, his policy was continued by the States General who, despairing of ever gaining complete independence offered the crown of the Low Countries to the king of France himself. Philip forestalled possible acceptance by strengthening his alliance with the French Catholics. Support of the Netherland revolt by the king of France would have meant a Catholic revolt against King Henry with the support of Spain. This threat was made so plain that King Henry refused the tempting offer. Obligated to turn once more to Queen Elizabeth, the States General received only the promise of an auxiliary army under the command of the Earl of Leicester, and in return were forced to accept English garrisons in the towns of Flushing and Brill.

Leicester came in 1585. Instead of concentrating on the military defense of the country, he turned his whole attention to the internal problems caused by the excessive provincialism of the States Assemblies. While Leicester was quarreling with the States of Holland, Parma conquered town after town. Again Spanish soldiery ravaged the soil of Holland itself. Leicester obtained some support from the lower classes, from the strict Calvinists and regionally, in the old northeastern provinces from Utrecht to Friesland. Against him stood the States of Holland, led by the first great native statesman of the Netherlands—Johan van Oldenbarnevelt.

Leicester's position, hopeless from the beginning because of his own incompetence, became impossible when suspicion arose that his policy was to serve the interests of England rather than of the Netherlands. This charge was first made when he banned all trade with Spain, all export of food stuffs, and ordered strict control over all shipping. The merchants of Holland accused him of deliberately destroying Dutch commerce for the benefit of English competitors. This was not true, but suspicion ripened into hostility when Leicester began to undermine the authority of the States Assemblies, to establish a more democratic regime under the city guards and guilds, with the secret intention of subordinating Netherland foreign policy to that of England. Elizabeth was just then making a final effort to appease Spain and Leicester tried to use the most violently anti-Spanish elements among the Netherlanders to secure a reconciliation with King Philip. This policy failed as it deserved to, for it was basically wrong. Indignantly he left the Lowlands, accusing the people of "ungratefulness," when they had merely defended their newly won freedom against the insidious policy of a selfish ally.

At this juncture, Parma conquered the port of Sluis on the Scheldt thus securing a naval base to receive the mighty fleet which King Philip was sending against both England and the Netherlands. The seamanship and heroism of Elizabeth's naval commanders and their sailors defeated the

Invincible Armada, and the watchfulness of Netherland cruisers prevented it from establishing contact with the troops of Parma on the coast of Flanders. From this moment England became the irreconcilable foe of Spain. After the outbreak of civil war in France, the conflagration spread over all western Europe. Philip had provoked a crisis, the first result of which was to divert his forces from the Netherlands. As in 1576, a sudden and unexpected change in the general political situation saved the revolution in Holland in an hour of dire peril. Again the scales turned, this time for good.

The events that followed would not have been so decisive had not latent forces in Holland and Zeeland come to the surface at the same time. The desperate struggle through the years 1572 to 1576, in which these two provinces were almost crushed, had placed in their hands nearly all the trade and shipping that formerly enriched the whole of the Low Countries. The ten years of internal peace that followed in the Northwest—years of civil war for the South—had consolidated this position. Parma's reconquest of Antwerp and most of the South and Northeast gave the Hollanders and Zeelanders an excuse to treat their competitors as enemies, and to sustain their monopoly of trade and shipping by a naval blockade. The war had not drained Holland's manpower, for the army was composed wholly of foreign mercenaries. It placed a heavy burden upon the treasury, but this was met by evergrowing revenue from taxation and port dues.

Although war funds were available, disorderly management hampered the Netherlanders in their military ventures during the years of Leicester's presence. The departure of this would-be reformer of Netherland institutions left the place free for national leaders. While Oldenbarnevelt, grand pensionary of Holland, shaped the foreign policy and ordered the finances of the new commonwealth, young Maurice of Nassau, son of William of Orange and his successor as stadhouder, reorganized the army.<sup>26</sup> This young man in his early twenties became one of the most famous generals in Europe. He owed his fame to his knowledge of engineering and supply problems, which he had thoroughly studied with the help of his cousin and friend, William Louis of Nassau, stadhouder of Friesland, and of mathematicians like Simon Stevin of Bruges. He understood that a small but well paid force that could be kept well in hand, was far more effective than a large army of underpaid mercenaries who devoted more time and energy to looting the countryside than to fighting the enemy. The canals and rivers of Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland permitted rapid concentration of a fighting force at any point of the front. More and greatly improved artillery, a better disposition of troops on the field of battle and above all thorough training of the soldiers before they were sent into battle made



the Netherland army the model of Europe's fighting forces. In a few years Maurice had reconquered Groningen, the towns of Overijssel and Guelderland, and secured the province of Zeeland against future attack by the occupation of a number of small Flemish towns on the south bank of the Scheldt. These "bridgeheads" created the present district of "Zeeuwsch Vlaanderen" (Zeeland Flanders) which until our day forms part of the kingdom of the Netherlands.

These victories greatly increased the prestige of the new Commonwealth. It had proved able to take care of itself without outside help. Not only that, Netherland troops were even dispatched to France to help the new king, Henry IV, against the Catholic League and Spain. The Netherland navy assisted the fleet of Queen Elizabeth in its attacks on the Spanish coast. The new relations between the States General at The Hague and the rulers of western Europe found adequate expression in the triple alliance with France and England concluded in 1596 and directed against Spain. The Netherland Republic was recognized as a sovereign power, *de facto*, if not *de jure*.

Thus, the "fight for freedom" had been brought to a successful conclusion. Spanish tyranny and the Inquisition had been destroyed in the Netherlands. In their place a republican government had arisen in which, it is true, a few thousand city aristocrats and country gentlemen members of the States Assemblies, dominated the masses of the people. A minority of Calvinists, as few perhaps as 10% of the population around 1600, monopolized all public worship. Had the Great Revolt, really been a "fight for freedom"; or was it, after all a partisan revolution, that substituted one tyranny for another? Motley would have indignantly rejected any such doubt of the purity of the rebels' intentions, but criticism of the traditional historical explanation by modern authorities has done much to deprive the greatest of all episodes in Netherland history of its glamor, and to reduce the "fight for freedom" to a hateful partisan strife between two equally selfish, intolerant and tyrannical factions.

The historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represented the revolt against Spain as lawful resistance by the legitimate authorities of the States Assemblies—against the usurpations of the monarchy. But before the eighteenth century had come to a close, a reaction set in which pointed out that not the States but the monarchy represented legitimate authority and that the revolt of the Netherlanders was nothing but a rebellion of subjects against their lawful king. The closing period of the eighteenth century was not particularly averse to such revolution, but Netherland historiography being on the conservative side sought to justify the revolution as a defense of the "true Reformed religion" against the persecution of

Rome. The liberal period which saw the rise of modern nationalism sought and found a "national" interpretation. Robert Fruin, greatest of Netherland historians, explained both the revolt against Spain and the subsequent cleavage of the Low Countries as a fight for freedom, restricted to their northern section by the strong social, political and historical antithesis between the peoples of present Belgium and Holland. Later authorities on the subject have varied this interpretation by predicating a broader national basis to include, either the whole population of both Belgium and the Netherlands or only the Dutch-Flemish speaking people.

The school of thought which found in unity of language the principal criterion of nationality, accused the Calvinists of the North of having broken the natural unity of the Netherland-Flemish group for purely religious motives. This school assumed such unity to have existed before 1576. Its opponents emphatically denied the "national" character of the revolt, on the ground that no Netherland, "Lowland" or "Dutch Flemish" nation existed before the Republic was constituted. Some pointed out that in point of fact, the monarchy, the central administration in Brussels, represented the "national" element in the sixteenth century Low Countries, and that the rebels were provincial separatists. In this interpretation the revolution was a civil war between provincialists and unionists embittered by identification with the conflict between Calvinists and Catholics. Its exponents labeled the revolt a "conservative revolution," sprung from stubborn local resistance to the introduction of modern centralized administration. They found forces of reaction, not of progress, behind the agitation. Add to these manifold interpretations that of a small group of Marxist historians who ascribed the conflict to purely economic motives, and we have some idea how far we have come from Motley's "fight for freedom."<sup>27</sup>

Yet, the Great Revolt *was* a fight for freedom. It did not substitute democracy for oligarchy in the city governments, nor the principle of tolerance for that of State-religion. But it maintained one great tradition, that of briefed freedom and limitation of the power of government by law and custom. The struggle of the late XVIth century was for the Netherlands, what that of the XVIIth century was for Great Britain. Government, even if concentrated in the hands of a small group of the people, was to be constitutional, not arbitrary. The fact that the revolution hindered the establishment of a well organized central administration does not make it reactionary. Less important aims were simply sacrificed to the more important. Thanks to the revolt of the XVIth century, the constitutional development of the Netherlands in the ensuing centuries was gradual and relatively peaceful, undisturbed by violent convulsions such as shook other continental European nations. Historians sometimes forget that the revolt

not only saved the northern part of the Low Countries from arbitrary rule, but also to a large extent the southern part as well. Spain's only means of winning back the southern provinces had been to guarantee their ancient rights and institutions. There too the revolt, if not so fully successful as in the north, nevertheless achieved great results.

Interesting as it is to determine the real character of these stirring events, it is more important to know how the actors in the drama understood and justified their own work.<sup>28</sup> The political justification of the Netherland revolution developed after the struggle had begun. The legitimacy of resistance and the rightful authority of those who led it were always emphasized. Not for a moment did the Netherlanders assert a "right of revolution"; they always claimed to be the defenders of law and justice. For the Calvinists the issue was clear. The magistrates from the king down were in duty bound to defend the purity of the Christian religion. In fighting the "abuses of Popery," the Calvinists claimed to be upholding the authority of the monarch who, if not blinded by superstition, would have been bound to do the same. The magistrates were always expected to lead. Popular excesses like the Iconoclasm of 1566 were aberrations, deplored by the Netherland Calvinist leaders, as well as by Calvin himself, not for their consequences but for their origin. All who resisted the purification of the Church were "usurpers"; if they used force to uphold their opinion, they became tyrants who might be withstood without incurring the blame of rebellion. In this the Netherland Calvinists, like their French co-religionists, stood half way between the extreme views of John Knox, who opposed such tyranny on principle, and of Martin Luther, who preached passive submission to the evil power of oppressive authority. Netherland Calvinist opinion justified resistance for religious but not for political reasons. It helped to relieve the conscience of the rebels, but did not satisfy their political convictions. Moreover, this predominance of religious over political motives contained dangerous implications of Church supremacy over the state, a thing the city aristocrats were not willing to tolerate.

Anti-clericalism had been a strong influence in the early years of the revolt. The towns of Holland would no more permit Calvinist than Catholic theocracy. When Adriaan Taling, minister of the Church in Leiden during the siege, compared the city magistrates to "pigs who look no farther than their fodder" because they had ordered the words *Haec Libertatis Ergo* ("All This for Freedom's Sake") printed on newly minted coins, instead of *Haec Religionis Ergo* ("All This for Religion's Sake"), Jan van Hout, town secretary, grabbed his gun and threatened to shoot down the minister from his pulpit. *Haec Libertatis Ergo* had a definite meaning, first expressed by Prince William of Orange in his manifesto of

1568, when he said: "The liberties of the towns and provinces are not free grants of royal benevolence but contracts binding both the prince and the people." Here for the first time, the "contract" theory which fitted admirably into the constitutional traditions of the Low Countries, was propounded. The great charter of Brabant, the *Joyeuse Entrée*, exonerated the States and the people of that duchy from all obligations towards their prince in case of violation of its stipulations. The northeastern provinces claimed to have accepted the Emperor Charles as their prince freely and by formal contract. The prince of Orange's manifesto was no novelty for the Netherlanders, who more or less arbitrarily assumed that the principles of the *Joyeuse Entrée* applied even outside Brabant. The inhabitants of Holland remembered having voluntarily accepted a Burgundian duke as their prince in preference to their natural princess Jacqueline of Bavaria. Once already they had renounced the allegiance of one prince to accept the sovereignty of another, why not again?

This opinion naturally led to a new theory, in which the rights of sovereignty were restricted by the rights of the people, and finally the authority of the monarch was held to be subordinate to that of the States. This became the Netherland conception of "liberty" for which the struggle against the power of Spain was carried on. It was the right of the people to demand—through their traditional spokesman—that the monarch respect the freedom and privileges of each social group and refrain from interference with their ancient institutions. If the monarch failed to respect their rights, the people were entitled to resist and even to oust him. This was stoutly maintained in the decree rejecting Philip's authority in 1581 in which it was said that all people were born free and that it was their right and duty to fight for this natural freedom against tyranny. Similar political ideas were propounded in France about the same time. The most famous of French treatises on this subject is Duplessis Mornay's *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* written in 1579 by a Huguenot who had just before spent considerable time in the Netherlands. There was definitely an exchange of ideas, but the difference between the French and the Netherland conception is too outspoken to assume copying of the former by the latter. In this and other French treatises the Calvinist theological and political theories of revolution are combined. In the Netherland declaration of 1581 religious reasons were wholly omitted; the Great Revolt was justified solely by political arguments. It was indeed a struggle *Libertatis Ergo*.

This fact had important consequences for the religious development of the Netherlands. In the crucial years between 1572 and 1576 the Calvinists, unflinching opponents of King Philip and the Inquisition, had taken the lead among the revolutionists and gained control over the city govern-

ments and thus over the States of Holland and Zeeland. From that time it became the constant aspiration of zealous Calvinists to impress their conceptions upon the state authorities and to re-shape the Netherlands as a second Geneva. Equally persistent as this pressing by the Calvinists, was the resistance to such extreme views by the majority of the ruling oligarchy. "This war," Oldenbarnevelt said, "has been fought for the freedom of the provinces, not for the establishment of one reformed religious creed over all the country." The Calvinist religious leaders demanded the suppression of all non-Calvinist public worship, the expulsion of all Catholic priests, war against popery, everywhere and always, as the first aim of Netherland policy. The political leaders, having seen that Netherland Catholics, after their cruel persecution by men like Lumey and Sonoy, commanders of the Sea Beggars, were all too likely to become pro-Spanish Fifth Columnists, agreed to the suppression of public Catholic worship and ordered all foreign priests to leave the territory of the Republic. But they had no inclination to imitate Philip and Alva and become active persecutors for religious motives. In theory the new Netherland government was intolerant, in practice it was not.

The Union of Utrecht explicitly provided for freedom of conscience and provincial autonomy in matters of worship. As a matter of fact the Calvinists, strongly supported by the armed forces, imposed Calvinism everywhere. The Reformed Church followed in the wake of Maurice of Nassau's conquering armies. Firmly entrenched in leading positions, the Calvinists and their non-denominational sympathizers, who dreaded Catholicism for its connection with Spain, decreed the abolition of all "popish practices" and thus slowly turned the majority of the people towards the Reformed Church. But it took a long time before this goal was achieved, and in many rural districts and among the poorer sections of the population in the cities Calvinism never took firm hold. Not without reason did Theodore Bèze complain of the laxity of the Netherland State in spreading Reformed principles. Calvinism was encouraged, protected, and given a privileged place in the new Republic, but only because it was proof positive of the irreparable break with Spain. The Netherlands became Calvinist because they were anti-Spanish, and this political Calvinism was a constant source of grief to all true believers in Calvin and his teachings.

Thus the policy of religious tolerance, inaugurated by Prince William of Orange, had ended in a tragic failure. His ideal had been that Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists should live side by side in peace. He was one of the few who indignantly opposed persecution of the Anabaptists, still suspect because of the upheaval of 1536. The foremost champion of religious tolerance in the Netherlands was Dirk Volckertszoon Coornhert. The

story of his life reflects the conflict of opinion then prevailing in the Netherlands. Born in Amsterdam and brought up as a Catholic, he traveled through Spain and Portugal before he settled in Haarlem where he became an engraver, illustrator, and printer. Acquiring knowledge by study of the books he printed, he became a notary and secretary of his town. The Spaniards put him in prison as a Protestant, but at the same time he incurred the wrath of Calvin for supporting the Castillionist point of view, which belittled the importance of dogmatic distinctions. Having escaped from the prison of the Inquisition, Coornhert fled to Germany, returned in 1572, and again was forced to flee because of his courageous denunciation of the cruelties perpetrated on Catholics. In 1576, as things seemed to be settling down in the Netherlands, Coornhert returned to Haarlem. Having resumed his office, he immediately began to advocate toleration and equal rights for both Catholics and Protestants. Once more he was bitterly attacked and driven into exile. Later he was permitted to return to Holland, but never to his own town of Haarlem. Until his death in 1590 he never ceased to maintain the great principle that brotherly love is the first maxim of Christian morality, and that even the most bizarre "heretic" only seeks to serve God to the best of his ability. Coornhert's ideals were never openly accepted by the Netherland Republic, but to the credit of its leaders be it said that they often followed them in practice in days when cruel religious persecution was common in both Protestant and Catholic countries. The same spirit of toleration saved the Netherlands from one of the worst horrors born of superstition, the burning of witches and sorcerers which came to an end in the Netherlands more than a century before its inhumanity was realized in either Massachusetts or Germany.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Dominating the Seven Seas

IN 1596 the Netherland Republic had entered into the triple alliance with France and England. Two years later King Henry IV made his peace with Spain at Vervins. After another five years, Queen Elizabeth died, leaving her kingdom to the wily James I. The Netherlands continued the struggle alone. Their former master, Philip II, died in 1598, but not before realizing that his sovereignty over the Low Countries, so tenaciously defended, had been a mill stone around his neck and had dragged him from the height of power to the abyss of disaster. Determined to rid the Spanish crown of these burdensome possessions, he transferred the sovereignty over the Low Countries to his daughter Isabella and her husband, Albert, archduke of Austria. Spain with her dependent territories he left to his son, Philip III. The cession to his daughter included his claims to the northern Low Countries where nobody then heeded his wishes or decisions. The archduke's attempt at reconciliation with the rebellious states inevitably came to naught, as the northern provinces were no more willing to recognize his sovereignty than that of their former king.

War continued; but the Republic, now perfectly safe from Spanish invasion, was unwilling to run great risks. Maurice of Nassau undertook an expedition into Flanders, where at Nieuwpoort in 1600 he won his only great battle in the open. In spite of this the Spaniards conquered Ostende, the last stronghold of the Republic in the southern provinces. The war spilled over the eastern boundary and a number of towns in the Rhineland and in Westphalia had to suffer attacks from both parties and to tolerate foreign garrisons. In 1595, the States forestalled a possible attack from East Friesland by occupying several fortresses along the river Ems. Only twenty-five years had elapsed since Netherland Calvinists had sought refuge from Alva's violence in the lands of the count of East Friesland and already that tiny country had been brought under the tutelage of the erstwhile refugees, now leaders of a strong power. In the first decade of the XVIth century when weariness weakened the strategy of Maurice of Nassau, the Spaniards under a new and energetic leader, Ambrosio Spinola of Genoa, won a few spectacular successes in the eastern provinces. After this the archduke concluded a twelve years' truce with the States General.

Both parties were weary of the long conflict, but neither had suffered enough to make it willing to sacrifice its principles. The archduke made the greater concession, for he agreed to deal with the Republic "as he would deal with a free, independent state." It was a roundabout way of recognizing the independence of the Netherlands, but one from which there was no going back.

The conclusion of the Twelve Years' Truce assured the Netherlands a prominent position among the European powers. Achieved after forty years of hard struggle, under the leadership of two members of the dynasty of Orange-Nassau and of the city aristocracy of Holland, this success sanctioned the constitutional organization of the Republic as it had developed during the war. The Union of Utrecht, originally nothing but a treaty of alliance between independent sovereign provinces, now became a sacred constitutional law which during two centuries was never changed, however glaring its shortcomings might be. Of this momentous document, only one article was ever put into full effect though at times violated in isolated instances. It was the first article which provided that the united provinces would present a common front to the outside world, as if they were one state. As far as the internal affairs of the new federation were concerned, the negative aspects of the Union were always stressed at the expense of the positive ones. In other words, the Union of Utrecht was merely an acknowledgment that each of the provinces needed the help of the others to maintain its independence, but so long as this limited purpose was achieved provincial sovereignty might in no way be curtailed. Consequently, the Republic had a national foreign policy, a national army and even to some extent a national navy but it had no national administration.

No wonder that the federal machinery worked with difficulty, indeed it is a miracle that it worked at all. That it did work was due only to certain factors which in themselves were contrary to the basic principle of provincial sovereignty. These factors were the common bond created among the inhabitants of the various provinces by the profession of one and the same Reformed religion (a national church movement in spite of the article of the Union reserving all church matters to provincial authorities); the semi-monarchical position of the House of Orange-Nassau, rather an anomaly in a state that professed to be a federative republic; the predominant position of the province of Holland which when necessary acted if the Union failed to act and often bore the financial burden for all the Netherlands. The constitutional history of the Netherland Republic reveals continuous conflict and compromise among these three forces.

The Republic was ruled by an oligarchy of some ten thousand persons who strove to keep all important political offices in their families. They



succeeded in so doing, fairly well in the XVIIth century and almost completely in the XVIIIth, the system being more effective in the towns than in the rural districts. The gentry were supposed to represent the countryside. In Holland they had little influence, one vote against eighteen for the towns—and that one vote was expressed through, although not controlled by the grand pensionary of the province, always a member of one of the city aristocracies. In Zeeland only one nobleman voted, the lord of Maartensdijk, who happened to be the prince of Orange. In the old northeastern districts united with Holland and Zeeland under Charles V, membership in the States Assemblies was dependent upon the possession of certain estates or sites where franchise-holding farmsteads once stood. Not that acquisition of such real estate unconditionally entailed a seat in the representative body. Noble descent and a certain degree of wealth were also required but no list of noble families or of franchise-holding estates was ever compiled. Strange as it may seem, this omission provided exactly the instrument the ruling class needed to maintain its oligarchy, for, in this way, every new claim to participation in the provincial government had to be passed upon by them.

The city aristocrats had little difficulty in preserving the oligarchic form of government, for in normal times members of the town councils decided who should fill any vacancy and they elected the burgomasters and jurors. Certain princely prerogatives, once exercised by the king's representatives, and later by the princes of Orange in their capacity of stadhouder, had hardly any influence on this self-perpetuating system of family rule. The ruling families proved so efficient in excluding new elements from participation in public affairs that within a few decades they formed a separate caste. Neither wealth nor ability could procure a share in the government to outsiders. As time went on, this family rule became more and more selfish, but it was many decades before it became really hateful to the people. On the contrary, for years the system seemed beneficial and well adapted to the peculiar Netherland circumstances. World wide trade had given the merchants of Holland a knowledge of foreign lands and customs. Their children, educated, both in a great business and in a great humanistic tradition and with sufficient means to devote time and energy to matters of state were on the whole better judges of international affairs than the princes of Europe and their aristocratic advisors. There was less corruption in Netherland administration than in that of other countries and, with growing prosperity, the people were in general well content to leave matters of general policy in the hands of the burgher-aristocrats. Only when disparity between profits received and services rendered became too glaring did the people object to the position of the privileged class.

The events of 1581 and later years had led the provincial States Assemblies to assume the sovereignty of which they had deprived King Philip. But the members of these assemblies, though all belonging to the new privileged group, really represented a number of conflicting interests. The divergence between town and countryside, apparent in the XVIth century, continued to exist in a somewhat different form in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. In Holland it presented no problem. There the towns ruled, and their relation to the rural districts, has been aptly described as that of a metropolis towards a colonial dependency. In Friesland the situation was reversed for there the towns held only one vote out of four, the States being divided into four sections, three of which represented the ancient *gouws*, while the fourth was composed of the eleven towns of the province. But in provinces like Overijssel, where three towns opposed sixty nobles, the vote of each town being counted as equal to that of one-third of the nobles, and in Groningen, where the city had one vote and the nobility another, the constitution invited conflict. There the "sovereign authority" exercised by the States Assembly was a relatively novel institution, and ancient Hansa towns like Groningen and those along the IJssel were reluctant to recognize it. An endless series of quarrels ensued—in the States of Groningen they at times developed into brawls among the "Noble and Mighty Lords"—with inevitable delay in deciding matters of higher policy, all of which caused grave concern to the gentlemen of Holland who were eager to get things done.

The same class that ruled the towns and rural districts controlled the judiciary, for the town jurors were elected by the town councils, and all administrative and judicial posts in rural districts were filled through the provincial States, controlled by the same group. The only weakness in the system—a weakness beneficial to the liberty of the people—was the lack of an organized police system in the towns. The officers of justice had a few assistants, but even in a big city like Amsterdam they were too few to maintain order. For this purpose the oligarchy had to depend on the city-guards and the army—that is on ordinary citizens they had haughtily excluded from the city government, and on faithful soldiers of the prince of Orange whose influence they jealously sought to limit. So if the citizens *wanted* to revolt, they could do so with little danger if supported by the prince of Orange. Then the oligarchic system was bound to collapse. The greatest of the oligarchs, John De Witt, the famous grand pensionary, was one victim of this peculiar weakness of the system.

The Seven Provinces forming the Union, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelderland, Friesland, "Stad en Landen"—(Groningen), Overijssel—and

supposed to present a common front to the outside world and to pursue *one* foreign policy, had no Foreign Office, let alone a Minister of Foreign Affairs or Secretary of State. All matters concerning the "Generality"—the nation as a whole—were handled by the States General, composed of delegates from the seven provincial assemblies. These delegates were not representatives of their provinces, and had no power to act on their own responsibility. They came to the Hague merely to hear what was proposed and then went home to receive instructions from their provincial assembly. If the proposal was something new, the delegates of the towns in the provincial meetings also went home to ask the views of their local authorities. Travel was relatively comfortable in the XVIIth century Netherlands as the canals offered safe and direct connections for the *trekschuit*, a river boat drawn by horse or manpower. Foreigners, used to bumping over uneven roads in heavy carriages, admired the *trekschuit* for its smooth convenience as today we admire the airplane. But a great deal of time was wasted in journeying to and fro between Friesland or Zeeland and The Hague, not to mention the long drawn out proceedings in the States General themselves. To make things worse, decisions had to be unanimous.

Except for the "Council of State," a relic of old times now only a shadow of its former self, the States General were the only national administrative body of the Republic. The constant fear of the provinces lest this central executive organ should gain influence at the expense of their own autonomy caused them to keep it under strict control. Such a system could not work. Some strong man or influential group had to take the lead and then the aristocracy would submit and follow, at times accepting leadership tacitly, at times protesting violently.

There were two centers where such leadership could originate. One was the province of Holland which, in theory, carried 54 percent of the nation's financial burden and, actually, far more and which also provided most of the nation's leaders and most of the nation's ships and sailors. The other was the House of Orange. Whenever one of these forces secured a firm hold on public affairs, the States General usually consented to delegate part of their power to a small committee selected from their number to cooperate with the leadership. The name of this committee, *Secrett Besogne*, shows that its chief purpose was to maintain secrecy in handling foreign affairs. Centralization under the supremacy of Holland would have been a logical national development. The other provinces could in no way compete with Holland and seemed to have no right to equal rank and vote. Therefore, if no counter influence made itself felt, Holland took the lead in foreign policy which it left in the hands of its highest official,

the grand pensionary. This was the basis of the political power of Oldenbarnevelt and later of John De Witt. But usually, there was a counter-influence, that of the House of Orange.

The constitutional position of the Orange family was peculiar. William I ("the Silent") had been one of the wealthiest land and office holders in the Habsburg Lowland state and stadhouder or lieutenant of his king. The king had been deposed but not his lieutenant. This curious and illogical situation caused no concern so long as the States of Holland were thinking of electing a new prince. The problem would have been neatly solved if William himself had been elevated to the rank of count of Holland as was planned in 1584. But after the whole idea was dropped the States appointed William's son, Maurice, as stadhouder with certain sovereign prerogatives. In the eyes of the States of Holland, Maurice was their servant for he was appointed and paid by them; in the eyes of the common people, Maurice was the national leader and therefore put above the States. Originally each province had its own stadhouder, although cumulative appointments were not unusual. In addition to being stadhouder of Holland, Maurice was appointed, in 1589 and after, stadhouder of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Overijssel. Friesland, Groningen, and Drente had their own stadhouder in the person of Maurice's cousin, William Louis of Nassau. Thus the chief offices in all the provinces were in the hands of one family in which the leadership of the Holland branch was recognized, a family that received added lustre from the glorious memory of William I, from its enormous estates and from the military success of Maurice and his position as commander-in-chief of the army and navy.<sup>29</sup> In theory, the prince of Orange was merely a prominent citizen of the Republic, as John De Witt used to say, in practice he was a candidate to the throne and recognized as such by the mass of the people and by foreign powers. Maurice's brother and successor, Frederick Henry, was addressed by foreign rulers as "Your Highness," a title usually reserved for princes. The Stuarts of England even gave a royal princess in marriage to his son, young William II. The princes of Orange had no claim to sovereignty in any province of the Netherlands but backed by popular approval they did claim the right to act in the name of the Union and if necessary to curb the self-willfulness of their rulers the Nobles and Mighty Lords—the States.

Cooperation between these two forces in the Republic—an ideal condition—lasted only so long as the country was in grave danger from the Spanish army. Holland financed and supported the campaigns by which Maurice liberated the seven provinces from Spanish rule. As soon, however, as this purpose was achieved (around 1600, after the great victory of

Nieuwpoort), a rift appeared between the two forces in the Union and soon began to widen.

This was the origin of the tragic conflict of the second decade of the XVIIth century in which Maurice of Nassau represented the forces of unification on a national basis and Oldenbarnevelt those advocating the leadership of Holland. The pretext for this conflict was a religious one: the Calvinists had split over the dogma of predestination, accepted in its strict interpretation by the majority under the leadership of Franciscus Gomarus, and rejected by a minority under Jakob Arminius, both professors of theology at Leiden. The States of Holland sided with the minority, as the more liberal conception concurred with the Erasmian tradition, still strong among the educated class which preferred political rather than dogmatic Protestantism.<sup>30</sup> The rift between Arminius and Gomarus led to a demand for the convocation of a national synod which Holland, relying on the text of the Union of Utrecht, stubbornly resisted. Foreign powers intervened in the dispute. The conceited James I of England, proud of his theological knowledge and prejudiced against Oldenbarnevelt, sided with the Gomarists; while the king of France, interested in maintaining the grand pensionary in power, favored the Arminians.

When Maurice entered the lists in aid of the Gomarists, he found his supporters ready. Behind him were the "land provinces," still jealous of the "sea provinces," a cleavage as we have seen as old as Netherland history. Behind him was the army, and with it the orthodox Calvinists, all who wanted Church interests to take precedence of political interests. Behind him also were all who opposed the oligarchy, or, for one reason or another objected to Oldenbarnevelt's influence. Among the latter happened to be the ruling magistrates of Amsterdam. The outcome of the conflict was never in doubt. It was of no avail to the grand pensionary that Hugo Grotius, the greatest genius in the field of letters ever produced by the Netherlands, stood on his side. But the outcome might have been less bloody. The seventy year old pensionary, "a man of great activity, business, memory, and wisdom, yes extraordinary in every respect" (we quote the register of the States of Holland) was beheaded on May 13, 1619, after a mock trial to cover up this political murder. Oldenbarnevelt was one of the few really great statesmen the Netherlands have ever had. Although not unselfish, his patriotic convictions were so deep, his success in the management of internal and external affairs so great, that he may well share with William I, the distinction of founder of the Republic. Twice in Netherland history was such a political murder committed, on each occasion a great man, a leader of the oligarchic party, was the victim. Force was on the

side of their opponents who finally after two centuries reorganized the Netherland state after their own conception. Spiritually the oligarchs of Holland, the "Regents" as they are usually called, may well be counted the victors, for it was they who largely shaped national traditions.

The Regents liked to draw parallels between their own state and that of Rome, the ideal republic. Holland, like Rome, had grown from small beginnings; but it had grown fast; and its empire extended to the distant corners of the earth. As in Rome, the creation of the Republic had been the work of the aristocracy who stretched forth the iron hand of unbending authority over the people and alone, directed the policy of the State. As in the Rome of Augustus, a prominent position in the Republic was held by an hereditary leader, commander-in-chief of the army and navy, who constitutionally, was no more than the first of the citizens. The burgher-aristocrats of Holland considered themselves the Romans of Northern Europe, and the humanistic tradition prevailing since the days of Erasmus gave life and color to this conception.

But the men of Holland did not fall into slavish idolatry of ancient Rome. Their spokesmen transposed the Roman epic into the ancient Germanic world to create a surer foundation for their political tradition. Publius Cornelius Tacitus, the great Roman historian from whom XVIIth century political thinkers learned the art of government, provided them not only with a eulogy of their semi-monarchical state controlled by an aristocracy but also with predecessors in old Germanic times, Civilis the Batave and his associates, who fought for freedom against Roman imperialism as they the Regents had fought for liberty against Spanish tyranny. Hugo Grotius, in his *On the Antiquity of the Batave Republic* written around 1610, carefully reviewed what Tacitus wrote on the revolt of Civilis and finding a reference to Civilis and the "leading men" of the Batave tribe as arbiters of peace and war, somewhat lightly concluded that this meeting of the "leading men" was the prototype of the later States Assembly, and that the latter institution dated back to old Germanic times. The States, Grotius contended, had always held the sovereignty of the province and had merely entrusted it to their princes during the Middle Ages to take it back again in 1581. Did not some of the medieval charters provide that the government be in the hands of "the most honorable, most noteworthy, most liberally-minded and peaceful" citizens of the town, and did not these terms exactly describe the ruling oligarchy? Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, son of an Amsterdam burgomaster and one of the outstanding men of letters of his time, wrote a play *Baëto* or the Origin of the Hollanders, in which he created a new version of the legend of the Batavi and described the origin of the ancient Batave "state." According to him, the first king

did not assume leadership of his people until asked so to do by the soldiers and citizenry and then only with the advice and consent of the most noble and prominent citizens. There was the same idea again: the prominent citizens in control of the community, they might offer actual leadership to a prince, a commander of the troops; but they would not tolerate presumption on his part or admit the mass of the people to a share in the public affairs.

This exalted conception of the high and unattainable character of the oligarchic system seemed to be shaken to its foundations at the beginning of the XVIIth century by the execution of its great protagonist Oldenbarnevelt. Grotius, condemned to life imprisonment, escaped in the well-known romantic way in a trunk from the place of his arrest and spent the rest of his life outside the Netherlands, a sad result of internal strife. But in spite of this rough repression of eminent learning representing the oligarchy, its tradition gained force as time progressed.

The Republic of the United Netherlands thus constituted, derived all its strength from its economic resources. Before the Twelve Years' Truce had come to an end, the provinces of Holland and Zeeland had developed into the principal commercial power of Europe, even of the world. In these two provinces no other city approached Amsterdam in the extension of trade and financial resources. The trade with the Baltic, with southern Europe, with the East and West Indies was largely concentrated in this one town which for three-quarters of a century provided the most spectacular instance of a city-empire the world has ever seen. The whole of the Netherland Republic then numbered about one million five hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom certainly more than half resided in the two coastal provinces and about 100,000 in Amsterdam. This small group of people built a commercial empire and became the leaders of trade in every corner of the world.

One of the strangest fables of history attributes the prosperity of the Netherlands in the XVIIth century as based upon the exploitation of the East Indies. Some textbooks of history even support this legend with the further statement that the seamen of Holland and Zeeland learned the routes of Spanish and Portuguese trade by piratical raids and plunder, finally supplanting the Spanish-Portuguese monopoly with their own, only to be superseded in turn by the economic expansion of England. Historical legends are usually persistent, but rarely are they so damaging to historical truth, as this particular fable which falsifies the whole picture of XVIIth century history.

Before the Great Revolt, Antwerp had far exceeded Holland and Zeeland in commercial importance. There was however one characteristic dif-

ference. Antwerp's trade was passive. Its ports received ships from Luebeck, Lisbon, and Venice which there exchanged their cargoes. Spaniards, Germans, and Italians were numerous among its leading business people. On the other hand, from the very first Holland and Zeeland concentrated on carrying freight in their own ships, and the geographic nature of these provinces furthered such a development. In the Baltic the sea captains of Holland had been fierce competitors of the Hanseatic merchants since the XVth century, and in the XVIth century—long before there was any question of "preying upon Spanish commerce"—they steadily forged ahead in the important wheat trade from Poland and Lithuania. In 1585 the city of Antwerp fell to the Spaniards. From that time the Scheldt was closed to all shipping. Amsterdam became the center of the Baltic trade which was soon dominated—but never monopolized—by Holland, Spain, at war all over Europe, did not produce enough for her own consumption. Netherlanders and Englishmen were the only people who could transport Baltic wheat to the ports of southern Europe. The English, up to 1588, had the advantage of being at peace with Spain while the Netherlanders, as "heretics" and "rebels," ran some risk in entering Spanish towns. Nevertheless, the bulk of the trade to Spain was carried by Netherlanders and not by the English.

This success was due to superior seamanship and greater financial resources. After 1594 the ship builders of Holland designed a new type of ship, the *fluit*, longer and narrower than the older models, and a good sailing vessel. The length of a *fluit* was normally 125 feet and its displacement rarely more than 300 tons. Because it was easier to handle, the new ship was more economic, and this fact alone explains something of Dutch maritime and commercial superiority. But far more important was the strong financial position of the Netherland merchants. Early Dutch capital resources did not originate from treasures captured from the Spaniards in piratical raids as some textbooks seem to suppose, nor were they built from the fortunes of Jewish immigrants as a few serious historians have suggested. They were slowly accumulated by many generations from the fisheries, the river trade, and the Baltic trade. The wealth of Holland was bolstered by the Spaniards themselves when they drove thousands of Calvinist merchants and industrialists from Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, and other southern cities. These merchants were allowed two years to wind up their affairs and were permitted to take their property with them, a lenient policy adopted by the duke of Parma to avoid a last ditch defense of beleaguered cities. These immigrants from the South added greatly to the financial resources of Holland and Zeeland and were always among the first to engage in new and risky enterprises, although they were by no



means the determining factor in the development of northern economic power. Dutch superiority in capital resources was the main cause of Dutch supremacy in world trade. When the Dutch East India Company was organized, a capital of six and a half million guilders was raised without any difficulty. The English East India Company had originally at its disposal only 80,000 pounds, not even a sixth of the Dutch capital. The king of Denmark, who planned an East India Company of his own, collected only a few hundred thousand guilders most of which was provided by Netherlanders. The merchants of Holland ousted the English from the Russian trade by offering higher prices and bribing the officials of the Czar who were quick to see where real money was to be had. The picture was the same everywhere and this was why the economic conflict between the English and the Netherlanders became so bitter. Whatever efforts the English made, however drastic the decrees King James signed, even claiming the North Sea fishing grounds as part of his kingdom, the progress of Dutch commerce backed by strong resources could not be equaled, let alone stopped.

Dutch capital, profitably employed in and steadily increasing because of European trade, made possible the expeditions to the four corners of the earth which caught the imagination of the world. Excess energy and resources found interesting outlets in these distant voyages which, after initial reverses produced sizeable returns. The East Indian and West Indian trade were the natural outgrowth of the rapidly expanding Dutch commercial system. A few facts will bear this out.

The trade on the Baltic had long been established. But up to the XVIIth century it was carried on in competition with the Hanseatics and in cooperation with Denmark. In the first decade of the XVIIth century the Hanseatics ceased to be serious competitors and, in 1611, Oldenbarnevelt reversed Netherland policy by concluding an alliance with Luebeck against Denmark that sought to enforce its control over the Sund. So far, contact with Russia had to take place through intermediaries in the Baltic ports. Temporary Russian control of Narva (until 1581) immediately brought Dutch ships into that port. At the same time Netherland sea captains began to follow the English and sail around Norway to Russia's northern coast. In 1567 Olivier Brunel, the pioneer of Dutch-Russian trade, opened direct relations with the Russians. For a time temporarily their prisoner, he accompanied their explorers along the northern coast of Europe and Asia as far as the river Ob. In 1578 the Dutch maritime interests established a factory at the mouth of the Dwina near Saint Michael's monastery, preferring this location to the landing places used by the English. Around that factory the Russians built the town of Archangelsk. In 1587, Dutch

vessels trading on the White Sea outnumbered the British ten to one, according to a statement by Czar Feodor. In 1600 Isaac Massa, a trader from Haarlem, was appointed the first representative of the Republic to the Czar of Russia. Eighteen years later the first Russian embassy came to the Netherlands.

Commerce with northern Russia naturally stirred interest in the navigation of the northern Seas. Desirous of reaching East Asia by a route not under Spanish control, Netherland navigators explored the Arctic Seas. They were perfectly aware of the fact, considered by some a great discovery of our "air-minded" generation, that the North Pole sea route, if practicable, would be by far the shortest between western Europe and eastern Asia. The first expedition to the north sailed in 1594. Two others followed in a few years, exploration being continued even after the first Dutch ships had reached the Indies by the traditional southern route. The only results were the discovery of Bear Island, Spitsbergen, and the northern point of Nova Zembla where Heemskerck and Barendsz were forced to spend the winter of 1596-97. Later expeditions in the XVIIth century brought Netherland ships as high as 83 degrees north, in the seas of Spitsbergen, and 85 degrees north in Strait Davis, where all hopes had to be given up that the Polar Sea could ever be used for commercial navigation. Later expeditions to the north were connected with the whale fisheries which started around 1613. Shipping in the far North occupied scores of vessels, while more than a thousand others sailed to and fro between Holland and the ports of the Baltic. Even more ships were engaged in the trade with England and the countries to the South. English foreign commerce, still in its early stages, was badly hampered by monopolies granted to privileged companies, the Muscovy Company for the Russian trade and the Merchant Adventurers for the cloth trade on the Continent. This system lacked flexibility, and Dutch ships not only carried all freight between England and Germany, but also between England and France, and even to a great extent the coastal shipping from one English port to another.

France was one of the Netherlands' most important customers as early as the XVth century. In the last decade of the XVIth century Dutch capital began to penetrate the whole French productive system. Agents of Dutch companies settled in the principal towns of southern France and by advancing money on the coming wine harvest secured virtual control over the French wine trade. Dutch vessels carried the product from Bordeaux and La Rochelle to Holland and Zeeland. Spain and Portugal depended so much for the import of foodstuffs on Dutch ships that Philip II, although sorely tempted to destroy ships and crews, hesitated to take any action against them. Having done so once or twice, he was forced to allow

them to return. We are told, but there may be some exaggeration in the report, that more than 25,000 sailors made their living in the Spanish-Portuguese trade alone. All these trade relations were fully established before a single ship had found its way to Java or the Moluccas. And a few years before the first trip to the East Indies was undertaken, Dutch ships penetrated into the Mediterranean where they found Italy in dire need of wheat. In 1590 for the first time they entered the ports of Genoa, Naples, and Venice, where they became regular visitors. Medieval commercial trends had been reversed: instead of meeting in the Low Countries the merchants of the Baltic and of Italy saw the ships of Holland come to them. Before the XVIth century came to a close, trade connections were established with the Levant and permission obtained from the Padishah of Turkey to trade with all Ottoman ports. Here in the Mediterranean the Dutch were their own worst enemies. The Barbary pirates were a scourge to all shipping, but it is doubtful that the North Africans with their old-fashioned ships could ever have become the menace they were later had not an international gang of outlaws taught them the tricks of navigation. And among these outlaws, Dutch renegades were prominent.

Around 1590 Dutch ships began to sail to the West Indies in search for salt they badly needed for the herring trade. The routes to the Western hemisphere were no secret to them. For many years Dutch masters and their crews, had sailed back and forth between Portugal and Brazil under the Portuguese flag. Dutch capital was back of Brazilian trade as the capital of Flanders and Antwerp had been half a century before. The strict regulations issued by Philip II who, after 1580, was king of Portugal as well as of Spain, made Portuguese-Dutch cooperation more difficult but did not bring it to an end. By a decree of 1585 he ordered all Netherland ships in Spanish-Portuguese ports seized and in 1590 he sent the crews of twenty-one ships on their way home from the Mediterranean to the galleys. These decrees merely incited the Netherlands to further expansion.

On the coast of Guinea, where the Portuguese held a monopoly, Zeeland and Holland interlopers carried on such a brisk trade in the last two decades of the XVIth century that their vessels often out-numbered those of the ruling power. By 1594, Dutch trading was expanding feverishly north and south, and the time was near when those enterprising merchants and mariners would begin to send their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope and through the Straits of Magellan. They were by no means unacquainted with these trade routes, for many Hollanders had sailed on Portuguese ships to the Indies, and though few such adventurers returned, several of them did come back to tell of their experiences. Dirk Gerritsen Pomp visited India and Japan in the seventies and eighties of the XVIth century,

and Jan Huyghen van Linschoten who returned from India in 1592 published, a few years later, a detailed description of the country and the course taken. One of the main reasons the Netherlands did not venture sooner on the Indian route was the exaggerated opinion of the efficiency of Portuguese control over the sea-lanes. As a neutral flag might provide some protection, we find enterprising traders negotiating in 1592 with a petty German prince, the duke of Lauenburg, for the organization of an expedition around the Cape. This scheme came to naught but in 1595 four ships commanded by Cornelis de Houtman set out for the Far East for the account of a group of Amsterdam merchants. Two years later three of the four came back, only half laden; but although the profits were by no means large, the success of the completed voyage provoked general enthusiasm and in 1598 no less than twenty-two ships, divided into five squadrons, each sailing for a different account, sailed on the same mission. Thirteen followed the route around the Cape explored on the first voyage, and of these, twelve came back, some of them with most precious cargoes that brought enormous profits. The other nine tried the western route through Magellan Strait, but of these only one returned to Holland. It was the ship commanded by Oliver van Noort who reached the Philippines by the western route and returned via the Sunda Islands and the Cape, thus completing the first Dutch circumnavigation of the world.

Of these five expeditions and five others that followed in 1599 and in 1600, only one, that commanded by Van Noort, turned to piracy and "preying on Spanish shipping" and that expedition resulted in the bankruptcy of Van Noort and of several of his financial backers. Jacob van Neck, commander of the second expedition to the Indies, proudly stated that his great commercial results were achieved solely by normal and honest trading. The leaders of the early expeditions usually received definite instruction to avoid bloodshed and violence with the natives as well as with the Portuguese. That policy changed after 1600 when the natives of the Moluccas, violently hostile to the Portuguese whom they had driven from most of their islands, requested help from the Dutch to oust their enemies completely. This led to the first clashes around Amboina and Tidore, but the initial military results gained by the Dutch were very meager.

Owing to the disasters that befell the expeditions which took the western route around South America, and to competition of the various companies, the total financial results of the first six years of the East Indian trade were small. Only one expedition gave the shipowners a profit of 100 percent, about 700,000 guilders in cash. Against this and smaller profits made by other expeditions around the Cape, stood a loss of half a million guilders on the voyages to the West. As a matter of fact the first six years

enriched a small number of individuals and ruined some others, but did not yield the nation as a whole as much as the herring fisheries earned in two or three months.

This state of affairs was clear to everyone interested in the new trade. How could the East Indian trade ever become profitable if the Portuguese should organize the defense of their monopoly, thus forcing Dutch ship-owners to arm their ships more heavily and to garrison their trading posts in the East? Thanks to the courage of its leader and crews, a small Dutch squadron under Wolfert Harmenszoon, had gained a spectacular victory in 1601 over a Portuguese fleet off Bantam in Java, but it had been unable to exploit this success and the Portuguese had severely punished the people of Amboina for appealing to the Dutch. The East Indies trade could only be continued if it were organized and the States General and the States of Holland, prompted by Oldenbarnevelt, insisted on the amalgamation of the existing companies for Asiatic trade into one commercial body. In March 1602 the United East India Company received from the States General a monopoly for all Dutch trade east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of Magellan Strait.

The charter of the Company granted it the privilege of exercising all rights of sovereignty on behalf of the Netherland Republic in the territories it might conquer and in its relations with Asiatic powers. It received a subsidy from the national treasury to carry on the war against Spain and Portugal in the same regions. The orders issued to the next expeditions explicitly provided that war should be waged against the enemies of the State wherever necessary, without however putting war above trade. The latter interests were to be the paramount consideration. The Company was a business concern, not intended for the creation of an Asiatic empire. The capital of the Company was to be six and a half million guilders. The Board of Directors was to consist of seventeen members nominated by the four chambers of Amsterdam, Northern Holland, the Meuse, and Zeeland. Anyone was free to subscribe to the shares or to buy them on the stock exchange, but the Directors of the individual chambers, except in the case of Zeeland, were not to be elected by the shareholders but to be appointed from among them by the councils of the towns in which the chambers were located. In Zeeland the States of the province controlled new nominations. Thus the influence of the ruling class on the administration of the Company was assured.

The new organization immediately developed amazing activity. In three years it equipped thirty-eight ships for the Far East; and within a decade its vessels were seen off the coasts of Japan, of China, of Indo-China and Siam, of India and Arabia. In the same ten years they had discovered parts

hitherto unknown to Europeans, such as the northern coast of Australia. In those ten years the Company distributed dividends only once, in 1610. True it was a large dividend, no less than 162 per cent of the original capital, but in the same period the new enterprise was burdened with heavy debts for the organization of its power in the Indies. Because of the peculiar financial organization of the Company, it is impossible to calculate the real profits derived from this branch of trade in the early part of the XVIIth century. It is a safe conclusion, however, that the shareholders and some of the commanders in the East who were rarely averse to serving their own interests along with those of the Company, earned a great deal of money. The nation as a whole saw a large part of these profits neutralized by the continuous disbursements to keep the war-chests and cash reserves in the East sufficiently provided. In the first decade of its existence the Company always had between twenty and thirty ships and perhaps three to five thousand men in the Far East. The pay of the lower ranks was outrageously low, a common sailor or soldier receiving about ten guilders a month for sailing half way round the world and venturing his life in war. The higher employees were not well paid either, but at least had a chance to make extra income by doing a little trading on their own account.

In comparison with the national income from the European trade, the East Indian undertaking was initially of no great significance. The fisheries alone occupied about twenty thousand sailors and paid about 2,800,000 guilders in yearly wages, bringing an annual profit of 800,000 guilders to the owners of the ships. In this branch of industry alone, six million guilders were invested or only a little less than the capital of the East India Company. The trade with Spain and Portugal, we are told gave employment to another twenty thousand sailors and that on the Baltic to even more. The capital invested in European trade far exceeded that employed in Asia, and the profits although less spectacular, were certainly more regular.

Thus the East Indian trade, which for centuries has fired popular imagination because of the adventurous character of the long sea voyages and of the blunt, open, if somewhat crude narratives left by its principal heroes, was really but one of many branches of Netherland commerce covering a large part of the world. Although the most spectacular, it was not even the most important ramification of Dutch trade. There were others, less noticed by contemporaries but of great consequence. In the early years of the XVIIth century, Dutch traders came to the coast of America to buy beaver skins from the Indians, and in 1609 Hendrik Hudson, instructed by the East India Company to explore the northeast passage to Asia, but obsessed with the idea of finding a route to the northwest, navigated his

ship up the Hudson River as far as present Albany. Adriaan Block, shipwrecked on the coast of Manhattan, was the first white man to build a ship in New York harbor. Isaac Lemaire, merchant of Amsterdam and originally one of the principal stockholders of the East India Company, decided to break the Company's monopoly by evading the terms of its charter and his son Jacques Lemaire sailed to the Pacific by the western route. He avoided the Strait of Magellan by circumnavigating the top of South America. The names of Cape Horn (after the town of Hoorn where Lemaire had found his principal supporters), Staten Island, and Lemaire Strait were then written on the map. All trade with America's east coast and the western shores of Africa was taken over by the West India Company when this body was organized after the Twelve Years' Truce had come to an end in 1621. However, this Western Company was not a commercial enterprise. It was actually organized for preying on Spanish shipping, for privateering against the enemy's American empire. Its history belongs to that of the war against Spain more than to that of general economic development.

The economy of the Netherlands would have been unbalanced indeed, if this astounding growth of overseas trade had not been accompanied by a similar expansion in industry and agriculture. Naturally, all forms of industry supplying the fleets were flourishing, and the wharves of Amsterdam, Zaandam, and the Meuse were forever busy building and fitting out ships. The manufacture of sails and ropes was an important industry. Salt, imported from southern Europe and the West Indies, had to be treated before being used by the fishermen. Such industries created work and provided sizeable profits, but they were wholly dependent upon the sea trade. More remarkable was the expansion of the cloth industry of Leiden, favored by the economic decline of the ancient sites of cloth production in the southern Low Countries. During the XVIIth century Leiden's industry flourished only to collapse when France introduced a protective policy, later adopted by most other countries. When Leiden was no longer able to compete with foreign manufacturers, the center of the industry was transferred to Brabant where the poor village people of this terribly impoverished district were willing to work for the lowest of wages. Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Rotterdam also had their share in the textile industry of the XVIIth century. Haarlem was a great center of linen manufacture while in Amsterdam silk imported from Persia and China was woven into beautiful fabrics. Utrecht surpassed all other Netherland towns in the production of velvet and *velours d'Utrecht* gained a world wide reputation.

Many thousands of people found occupation in these industries, but only a few of them attained prosperity. The same was also true of many smaller

industries which, like the manufacture of gin in Schiedam, sometimes gained wide popularity but hardly contributed to the general well-being of the people. It is only too true that the masses of the townspeople received a very small share in the marvelous profit realized by the economic expansion of the country. Women and children were often preferred as workers in industry because they were "cheaper," which means that children six years of age and over were forced to work as long as daylight permitted their exploitation, and then were set free to beg on the streets. In the busiest center of Holland's industry, twenty thousand people—not necessarily unemployed—had to be kept from starvation by charity, and it was truly said that in Amsterdam contagious diseases which took the lives of thousands of poor people, never afflicted "burgomasters, aristocrats, ministers of the Church, or town officials." Apparently pre-disposition for the disease had something to do with under-nourishment and miserable living quarters. The dwellings of the poor were not so neat as the rooms we see in Vermeer's paintings, their clothing not so fine as that of the ladies and gentlemen portrayed by Rembrandt. Under-payment was normal, and vacations were unknown. There was no respite on Sundays, and the previously existing holidays were abolished by the Reformation.<sup>31</sup>

Granted that appeals to charity usually met with generous response from those who were more amply blessed with this world's goods, but willingness to give alms does not make up for a lack of all sense of responsibility towards one's fellowmen. In the East Indies the ruthlessness of Governor General Coen, who did not hesitate to exterminate the people of the Banda Islands to gain control of their clove-production, was opposed by the humanity of Laurens Reael and others who bitterly protested the massacre of the Bandanese who, they said, had "fought for the same cause against Coen as the Netherlands fought for against Spain, that of their freedom." Sailors kidnaped and murdered so-called savages when landing on some forlorn shores in far away Tierra del Fuego or Africa; but others, we are told, had such commiseration for a little negro baby, left behind by his fleeing mother, that they sacrificed their scarves to make it comfortable. These are a few instances of conflicting attitudes which could be multiplied a hundredfold. It was poverty that made the working people both on land and on sea rough and uncouth. In the same way the upper classes, often ruthless in their exploitation of the poor and merciless towards beggars, showed on many occasion a heart for the sufferings of the masses.<sup>32</sup>

All these commercial and industrial activities caused a vast accumulation of capital in the hands of the principal merchants, while the middleclass, although by no means rich also became moderately prosperous. This capital sought investment. Government bonds, issued by all the provinces



(those of Holland being naturally preferred) were the most favored form. Because of growing confidence in the stability of the new Republic and the continuous increase in capital, the rate of interest paid by the States of Holland was reduced from 12 or 10 percent to 6 percent a year. In 1650 Holland alone had a national debt of 140,000,000 guilders and nearly all its bonds were in the possession of nationals of the province.

Another more speculative but possibly more profitable investment was provided by agricultural enterprises, in the first place, by the dyking in and reclaiming of swamps, inland lakes, or inlets of the sea. In the twenty-five years before 1590 and 1615, a period when the East India trade had not yet added much to the welfare of the Netherlands, nearly a hundred thousand acres of land were reclaimed. In 1610 the Beemster lake, nearly eighteen thousand acres in extent, was drained. It proved a hazardous enterprise from a financial point of view, for the first organizers lost nearly all their money when the breaking of a dyke and reflooding of the *polder* made necessary a second draining. Once the enterprise was completed it gave enormous profits, nearly a quarter of a million guilders a year. To continue our comparison between the returns from home and continental enterprises, with those from the Indies, the profits from reclaiming land alone must have equaled or exceeded those from the Far Eastern trade during the first decade of the XVIIth century and probably continued to exceed them for the next hundred years. In the years between 1615 and 1640 another 110,000 acres were added to Holland's arable soil. The largest of all inland lakes, the *Haarlemmermeer*, which extended over fifteen thousand acres and yearly extended to destroy neighboring peatlands, was also scheduled for drainage. The famous engineer, Jan Adriaansz Leeghwater, made plans for this enterprise which even in the nineteenth century when the project was completed with the help of steam driven machinery, provoked the admiration of all experts. The risks and the capital involved seemed too great, however, for the seventeenth century and Leeghwater, greatly disappointed at not being allowed to undertake this monumental work, looked for other tasks. His fame was such that he was called to France, to Lorraine, and to Holstein to undertake drainage works. Even so, he remained a simple working-man, the master mechanic and carpenter who, in between the draining of swamps, devoted his time to the construction of clocks for church towers, and felt honored when he was allowed to wait upon His Excellency, the Prince of Orange, and the city aristocrats who had come to "open" the newly reclaimed polder in the Beemster.

If we seek to give the economic system of the seventeenth century Netherlands a name, and many people nowadays insist on pasting a label on every historical or social development, it should be that of imperialistic capi-

talism.<sup>33</sup> Capitalist it certainly was and its imperialism was by no means confined to America, Asia, or Africa, but sought to penetrate and master Europe as well as distant lands. Everywhere and always the sole concern of XVIIth century Dutch capitalism was "profit making," whether under the Netherland flag or that of some other nation or even under the black flag of piracy. But it must be repeated that in this respect the Netherlands sinned no more than other nations. Gold was their sole aim and many did not hesitate to sell Spain ammunition and war equipment that, a few days later, might be used against Netherland towns and troops. A popular story told of a sea captain who said that "he would sail into hell and trade with the devil were it not that his sails might catch fire."

Netherland merchants had no more qualms about slave-trading than the English, Spanish, or Portuguese; and the Dutch slave vessels plying between the coast of Guinea and the West Indian Island of Curaçao became notorious. But slaves brought to the Netherlands became free the moment they trod its free soil, and worth remembering are the lines the poet Breero wrote on the slave traders of his day in his town of Amsterdam:

"Inhuman is this practice, a godless knavery,  
For human beings to be sold, like beasts in slavery.  
In this town, too, there are a few, who ply the trade  
But God knows who they are; their sins shall be repaid."

Slave-trading was only one of the more extreme outgrowths of this thirst for gain. The truly capitalistic character of the early XVIIth century Netherland economy was nowhere more manifest than in Scandinavia.

The Scandinavian countries, so long under the supremacy of the Hanseatic League, were as poor in capital as they were rich in natural resources. Norway produced wood; Sweden, iron and copper; Denmark's potentialities were much the same as those of the Netherlands, but financial resources for their development were lacking. From the end of the XVIth century the kings of Denmark and Sweden appealed to Holland for assistance. Denmark sought to establish an East Indian trade of her own with Dutch money, Dutch leaders, and Dutch crews sailing under the Danish flag. In Sweden King Charles IX, endeavoring to promote his country's commercial relations, decided to build a port on the southwest coast of his kingdom. Göteborg arose, largely constructed and settled by immigrants from the Netherlands. Abraham Cabelliau, the leader of this enterprise, formerly a captain in the West Indian trade, became Swedish minister of economic affairs. He formed the audacious idea of competing with the Dutch East India Company and of diverting the Persian silk-trade from southern Persia where the Company had its factories to lead it along the

old Viking route through Russia to Sweden. This plan was by no means impracticable. Transportation along the Volga and Newa to Sweden was certainly less expensive and less risky than the long journey around the Cape of Good Hope and over the stormy Atlantic Ocean to Holland. But the Russian czars were not cooperative. Sweden was their potential enemy, the state that kept them from the Baltic. Rather than favor Sweden and her Dutch financial backers, the czars sought to organize their own silk-trade; but in turn they met with little encouragement from the merchants of Amsterdam. However, the trade along the Volga later became important in connection with the Russian export of furs, for during the seventeenth century numerous small colonies of Netherlanders were scattered along the Russian rivers, from Narva and Archangelsk to Astrakhan.

While Cabelliau planned Swedish-Dutch economic expansion in the East, another Netherland promoter dreamed of using Sweden for the realization of a great Protestant American empire that would supplant the Spanish Catholic regime in Central and South America. This man, Willem Usselinx, a rather disagreeable bachelor who was easily offended and believed his compatriots were all in league against his wonderful ideals, left the Netherlands after his proposals for a West India Company had been rejected. Such a Company, he insisted, was needed not only for business reasons but also for the propagation of Calvinism in South America and for the colonization of a new Netherland beyond the ocean. The States General gave him ample opportunity to expound his plans, but finally rejected them as too ambitious, giving their preference to the founding of the privateering enterprise of 1621 which took the name of West India Company. Usselinx, disgruntled, withdrew to Sweden where he sought support for his grandiose schemes from Gustavus Adolphus and where a man, he wrote, "could at least live in peace without being constantly disturbed by women's mania for cleaning and dusting."

Sweden could not provide the resources Usselinx needed for his plan. He went to France, then returned to Sweden; and finally a small Swedish Netherland Company was launched with Dutch money, working with Dutch ships, and former employees of the Dutch West India Company. Peter Minuit, founder of New York, was to be the first Swedish commander in America. The colony was settled within the boundaries of New Netherland on the Delaware River and in 1637, of the twenty-four men garrisoning the Swedish fort Christina, twenty-three were Netherlanders. In all these Scandinavian enterprises, Netherlanders, who resented the monopolies held by the great Companies in their own land competed with Netherlanders.

The position of Louis de Geer, merchant and industrialist from Liège

who had taken refuge in Holland was somewhat different. De Geer succeeded in getting control of the Swedish copper trade, and in return for loans and merchandise received a number of mining concessions. Upon this basis he built Sweden's heavy industry. His concern was a trust which controlled the most important Swedish product from the mine to the retail shop. While old De Geer cast guns and equipped armies and navies, his daughters in Stockholm sold copper kettles, knives, and kitchen utensils over the counter. With his industrial enterprises he combined a banking business which enabled him to lend to the Swedish kings the money with which they bought their military equipment in his storehouses. The great campaign of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany from 1630 to 1632 was largely financed by De Geer and supplied from his factories and warehouses. Who knows whether the epic march of Swedish troops from the Baltic to Munich would ever have been made had it not been for the backing of De Geer? Later when Oxenstierna, the Swedish chancellor, continued the struggle for the domination of the Baltic and found Denmark's navy in his way, an appeal to De Geer for help sufficed to bring relief. With his own money the great capitalist assembled a navy in Dutch ports, equipped it with guns from his storehouses, manned it with a Dutch crew, entrusted the command to a Dutch admiral. Flying the Swedish flag this fleet sailed for the Baltic and defeated the Danish navy which by the way, was largely composed of hired Dutch auxiliaries. This campaign of 1645 virtually secured to Sweden the command of the Baltic, a result of supreme indifference to De Geer but not to the States General who watched with grave concern the growth of Swedish imperialism that might well endanger free navigation in the Baltic.

De Geer's career provides one of the most striking instances of XVIIth century Netherland capitalism, but its presence could be noticed everywhere Netherland merchants went. There is no more interesting romance of trade than the development of the East India Company. The traditional picture of Dutch activity in the East emphasizes the crude and merciless exploitation of the inhabitants of the Spice Islands by the rigorous maintenance of a strict monopoly in favor of the Company. Such a system of exploitation existed, it is true, in the Moluccas, although nearly twenty years of hard fighting were required to enforce it. The results were most damaging to the interests of the native people and, therefore in the long run, to the interests of the Company itself. But it is by no means true that the Company depended upon this exploitation for its profits. From the first days of trading in the Far East the Netherlanders had had difficulty in finding suitable merchandise for export to the East. They could not forever continue to bring in "NoreMBERgerie," that was ironware, small uten-

sils, weapons, and other products from the workshops of Nuerenberg and other German industrial centers. A substantial item of the outgoing cargo was bullion, coined silver and gold which constituted a heavy drain on the precious metal reserves of Europe. To reduce this drain and to make the East Indian trade more profitable, the fourth governor general of the Indies, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, planned a new economic system for the Company. Coen was astounded by the enormous amount of international trade going on among the Asiatic countries. Would it not be possible for the Dutch to obtain the same control over the freight carrying trade in Asia as they held over this trade in Europe? If so, the profits from that trade could be collected in the form of precious Asiatic products for shipment to Europe. The Directors in Amsterdam would receive their yearly dividends from the Asiatic trade in merchandise upon which they could make an additional profit in the European market.

In 1619 Coen founded a center for this inter-Asiatic trade, the city of Batavia. Within a few decades the new system, though strongly modified from Coen's original views, was working fairly well. The accounts of the Company clearly bear out that the outlying trading posts in countries where the Company held no sovereignty and did not need to maintain armed forces, normally brought far larger returns than posts in the Malay Archipelago where the Dutch monopoly had to be enforced by ships and troops. Nagasaki in Japan, Ormuzd and Ispahan in Persia, and Suratte in India were among the most profitable factories. By this inter-Asiatic trade the Company not only succeeded in earning large dividends for the shareholders in Europe but also in accumulating in India a reserve fund of about twenty million guilders. In building up this trade, the Directors had burdened the Company in Europe with a debt of about ten million guilders. Thus the Dutch East India Company really owed its success to having ample capital at its disposal, and it was to this backing as well as to the energy of many of the commanders in the field that the Company owed victory over its competitors.

The English East India Company had penetrated into the spice producing areas shortly after the Dutch, and bitter competition ensued that often resulted in bloodshed. A naval battle fought off the roadstead of Batavia was almost a complete Dutch defeat, but the energy of Governor General Coen saved the situation. Driven from the Malay Archipelago the English were giving up hope of obtaining a share in the spice trade when political circumstances in Europe forced the States General to agree to a proposal made by King James that the activities of the two companies should be coordinated. Coen, furious at being forced to work with the English, forced them out of business by the simple expedient of making cooperation

so expensive for both sides that only the Dutch, and not the British could afford the burden. The so-called "massacre of Amboina," a rather superficial judicial proceeding against some Englishmen accused of conspiracy against Dutch sovereignty, which ended in the execution of the alleged culprits, further embittered relations. King James expressed the resentment of the British when he said to the Dutch Ambassador in London:

"Your men have robbed my people of their possessions. You have made war on them. You have killed and tortured several of them. You never considered the benefits you have received from the Crown of England who made and maintained you as an independent nation. You have a man in the Indies who deserves to be hanged. Your people present your prince of Orange as a great king in the Indies while they picture me as a small ruler. You are masters of the sea wide and large and can do what you want."

There was much truth in King James's words, although it is remarkable to see the story of Queen Elizabeth's dealings during the Netherland revolution transformed into a legend of royal magnanimity.

The sudden eclosion of Netherland capitalistic success comes so surprisingly in the general picture of world history, that other and hidden forces are often sought behind it. Already Schiller has been quoted: "There is no people less disposed to heroism than the Dutch but the prompting of great ideals made them play a role far beyond their natural capacities." It is indeed remarkable that in the course of forty years, this small nation should found New York, then New Amsterdam (1625); Capetown (1652); and Batavia (1619); establish the first summer settlement in the Arctic Seas, Smeerenberg on Spitsbergen; discover Tasmania and New Zealand (1642); sail the Pacific from the Antarctic Seas to Kamchatka; trade with the Japanese, the only Europeans so to do; control the coastlands of southern Asia; conquer Pernambuco and northern Brazil; settle a number of West Indian Islands, the Hudson valley, and the southern point of Africa, besides sending small colonies of expert farmers and craftsmen to England, France (La Rochelle), Brandenburg (Potsdam), Sweden (Göteborg, Norrköping); Denmark (Amager), and Russia (Moscow). In northern Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century Dutch was the common language of the sea, and Dutch technical terms found their way into English, German, Russian and the Scandinavian languages. At that time it would have been more likely that an English admiral could speak Dutch than a Dutch admiral English. Dutch was the diplomatic language of the countries on the Baltic. What enabled the Netherlands to make such rapid expansion, what prompted the rather slow and allegedly obtuse Lowlanders to such outstanding achievements?

Those well versed in Netherland history and acquainted with the principal traits of the Netherland people, know the answer. They know that the geographical location of the country, the sea-faring traditions of the people, the moderate and nerve-steadying climate all had their share in this development. They know that Netherlanders are neither slow nor without temper and ambition. Historians not entirely satisfied with these natural causes, have sought a special stimulating factor in XVIIth century Netherland history and found it—some in the predominance of Calvinism, some in the influx of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. The moral principles of Calvinism and the rigidity of its tenets may have helped to foster the qualities of self-reliance and of persistence in a given task so typical of the Netherlanders; perhaps also a feeling of superiority, of being God's elect and as such above the masses outside His grace. But Calvinism certainly was not a dominating factor in the development, for we have seen that in the few decades in which the sudden upsurge occurred, the dogma of Calvin had no more than a meager hold on the spirit of the leading Netherlanders. A more likely cause of economic prosperity was that practical but not superficial way of thinking that made the leading classes in Holland averse to all extremes in religious controversy.

There is no doubt that Jews, especially *Christãos Novos* and *Marranos* (Portuguese and Spanish Jews, outwardly converted to Christianity) played an important part in Netherland economic life. But their importance increased considerably with the progress of time, and was far greater in the XVIIIth than in the XVIIth century. Simple chronology bears this out.<sup>34</sup> The first settlement of Portuguese-Spanish Jewish refugees was in 1593, when Netherland commerce was already flourishing. The immigrants brought some capital with them, but not enough to be of much importance. Many were moderately wealthy, but none of the heads of the two or three hundred Jewish families in Amsterdam at the beginning of the XVIIth century, is mentioned among the prominent empire-builders of that time. We know of many Amsterdam business leaders of the period; we know that Calvinist immigrants from the southern Low Countries were always in the forefront of new and hazardous enterprises. We know also that the money they ventured was their own, nowhere do Jewish elements appear. Of the six and a half million guilders needed to start the East India Company, not even five thousand came from Jewish sources. It is said that in the XVIIIth century one-fourth of the shares were controlled by members of the Jewish community, but this movement of capital cannot have begun before 1700. There was never a Jewish director in the Company, and the silly attempt to attribute Jewish origin to Governor-General Coen—by deriving Coen from Cohen—only betrays a pitiful ignorance of the Dutch

language.<sup>35</sup> The Amsterdam Jews were more interested in the West than in the East India Company, probably because they continued to trade with that part of the world, through their relatives in Spain and Portugal. Even here they did not contribute more than a third of one percent of the capital of the West India Company. Hardly any Jews moved to the East Indies, but the lands conquered from Portugal in America, where they perhaps hoped to find reminiscences of their former fatherland, held great attraction for them.

The Spanish-Portuguese immigration to Amsterdam added a remarkable element to Netherland society. It increased the picturesqueness of the city, and no one appreciated this more than Rembrandt, who found so many of his models in the growing Jewish quarter. Re-converts to Judaism who, in the time of the Inquisition, had lost contact with Jewish tradition, eagerly sought to master Hebrew and become acquainted with the most recent Jewish religious thinking. Having returned to the creed of their fathers through trial and dangers, they were strict in dogma and in their adherence to ritual. The relative freedom of the press permitted by the States of Holland enabled the new community to print Hebrew texts as well as works on religion and philosophy, written in Spanish or Portuguese by Jewish leaders who had not yet mastered Hebrew. A school for Jewish theology and literature was founded in Amsterdam and the training of religious leaders energetically promoted. However enthusiastic the prosecution of Hebrew studies may have been, the *Christãos Novos* hardly equaled the Christian scholars of Leiden University in penetration of ancient Israelite thought. In the rediscovery of ancient Israel Protestant biblical scholars were a greater help to the Jews than were the Jews to the Christians. Freedom of conscience was guaranteed by the Union of Utrecht, and without much hesitation the Jewish immigrants extended this to include freedom of worship. The authorities of Amsterdam raised but little objection to the opening of synagogues, to the dismay of the Christian minorities who resented the privilege granted to the Jews less than the discrimination that denied to Catholics and other non-conformists what was permitted to the Jews. Yet the general attitude of the rulers and people of the Netherlands towards the Jews remained friendly. More and more refugees came in from foreign countries, and to the small but wealthy colony of Sephardim, another Jewish settlement, the larger and poorer one of Ashkenazim, was added after the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in Germany.

In the early decades of their "Golden Age" the Netherlands surpassed all other countries in prosperity. They also granted greater freedom to the individual, and the liberal economic policy followed by the States was



almost as potent a factor in national welfare as was geographic location. The port and custom duties, very moderate in comparison with those of other states, encouraged shipping and trading. Similarly the willingness of the Government to admit foreigners drew energetic and intelligent members of various other nations to the United Provinces. Although the guilds and the minor trades, remained hermetically closed to these immigrants, the newer industries and sea-faring were always open to them. Englishmen served in great numbers on Dutch ships and some like Hendrik Hudson have remained famous in history because of what they did in this service. Numbers of Germans also came, from petty princes of the Empire who served for high pay as commanding officers in the Dutch army, to those driven by misery or the spirit of adventure to enlist as soldiers of the East India Company. Others came from German Calvinist countries overrun by their enemies, and ministers of the Church separated from their congregations found new pulpits in the Netherlands. Mining and forestry experts found remunerative employment with the West and East India Companies. French Calvinists, insecure at home after the death of Henry IV, also flocked to the haven of freedom. There were so many French officers and soldiers in the Dutch army that French Calvinist congregations were organized, which included refugees from the Walloon provinces.

The excellence of the Dutch army under Maurice and Frederick Henry, drew young officers and future princes to its headquarters to study the new tactics. The Bouillons of France, related to the House of Orange, but soon to separate from the Reformed Church, were there. So was Frederick William of Hohenzollern, later the "Great Elector" of Brandenburg-Prussia, who married one of Frederick Henry's daughters. Thus the headquarters of the Prince of Orange became an academy of military science. The presence of so many who were illustrious, if not by intellect at least in name, formed a magnificent court at the Hague, in striking contrast to the simple princely household at Delft of the first William. French and German scholars came to Netherland Universities. More than any of the other provinces, Holland was a cosmopolitan center, the focal point of divergent trends of thought and culture. Yet, all these elements were blended into one national Netherland civilization.

It is hardly possible to give an adequate description of this civilization in the few lines that can be devoted to it here. Nor does it make any sense to paste a few wornout labels, "Baroque," "Dutch-Renaissance," and others like them, under the multi-colored picture of Netherland life of the "Golden Age." Professor Huizinga, in a series of lectures on the general aspects of this cultural period, has emphasized its "middleclass" character,

and explained how in this liberal oligarchy, national culture was the common cement that bound together the ruling and middleclasses. Also that in this professedly Calvinist community all the leading lights of culture, Rembrandt, Vondel, Grotius, were dissenters from the privileged Reformed Church.<sup>36</sup> All the arts, painting, architecture, literature, were strongly influenced by southern Renaissance and Baroque models. There are numerous examples of Rembrandt's direct inspiration by Italian predecessors, from Leonardo da Vinci to Caravaggio. Nearly the whole dramatic literature of the Netherlands is inspired, directly or indirectly, either by Plautus and Terence, or by Spanish, Italian, and French works. English drama, introduced into the Netherlands by English actors in Leicester's day, had far less influence on Dutch authors. But in all these imitations native Dutch traditions so thoroughly transformed the foreign models that true works of art were created.

It is obviously impossible to define the essential characteristics of these native artistic traditions. Realism and a love of small detail, to give individual character and color, were conspicuous. There seems to have been an aversion to abstract distinctions and an attempt to maintain intimacy with varying outlooks on life. The artist usually formed an integral part of his community and did not live on the outskirts of society as often happens in our day. Constantijn Huyghens, artistocrat and shining light of classical learning, is the author of a popular comedy which sometimes shocks our more delicate feelings. Certainly the painters dealt with life in all its aspects from the loftiest to the most vulgar, and succeeded in bringing out the really human qualities of all their subjects. Snobbery in any form was still foreign to Netherland artists in the early XVIth century, and to Netherland society in general. It was soon to follow, however.

Painting was the most popular of Netherland arts. All the great Dutch masters produced and sold a large number of works, and taught scores of pupils. Only a small percentage of these became professional painters. Breero the poet and Jacob van Campen the architect, started life as students of painting. When an Asiatic prince needed a Dutch artist for his court, the East India Company had no difficulty in finding a budding portrait painter among its employees. In the second half of the century some people in Batavia possessed sixty or seventy pictures, and so general an interest in painting necessarily implies a great deal of amateur work. There is no reason to add to these pages a catalogue of famous Dutch masters or their biographies, which can be found in any biographical dictionary or textbook on the history of art. The names of Rembrandt, Vermeer, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Gerard Dou, Ruysdael, Van Goyen, Van de Velde, and many others are familiar to all visitors of museums anywhere in the western

world. Yet it is not without interest to devote a few words to the position of painters and the art of painting in Netherland society as a whole. The art was popular because it was—to use our most familiar label—far more “democratic” than any other of the arts, even literature. Portraits or groups, landscapes or seaviews, still-life or historical and allegorical compositions appealed to the masses, and those who could not afford paintings could at least acquire engravings by the same masters. We know that paintings were sold at open stands at the fairs, and engravings were so popular that their production became an export industry. In the first decade of the XVIIth century the East India Company even tried to sell them in the Far East, but the Buddhists and Moslems of southeastern Asia showed no desire to buy the choice collections of landscapes, nudes, classical illustrations, Madonnas, and scenes of Dutch country life sent out.

The Dutch masters naturally chose their subjects to suit the taste of their patrons. The official predominance of Calvinism meant that they had few orders for large murals and none for huge altarpieces like those which in the southern Low Countries occasioned Rubens’ masterful compositions. The court of the princes of Orange, although a little suspect to the more extreme Calvinists because of the carefree social life centered there in Frederick Henry’s time, did not offer the opportunities one might have expected to Dutch painters. Frederick Henry ordered a number of paintings, among them several by Rembrandt; and his widow had the great hall of her residence at the Hague, the “House in the Woods,” decorated with large pictures representing the great moments of her husband’s life. The princes of Orange favored painters from the southern Low Countries who worked in the grand Baroque manner as well as their northern colleagues.

The great artists of Holland fortunately escaped being the protégés of the mighty. To be sure, men like Pope Julius II and the princes of the House of Medici were wonderful animators of art in Italy during the Renaissance, and the world owes much to the support given by Spanish kings to men like Velasquez. But the situation in the Netherlands, where a large number of less wealthy patrons fostered painting not for their own glory but out of real interest in art, was far more desirable. This was responsible for the great variety of artistic production, and created a far more agreeable social position for the artist. The Netherland painter of the XVIIth century was regarded socially as a skilled craftsman, but even so the distance between him and his patron was far less than that between the highly honored artist at a royal court and his Maecenas. The prices paid for paintings were high, if we allow for the fact that the works of a contemporary master can never be valued so highly as when their exceptional value has been recognized for generations and they can no longer be pro-

duced. Prices of sixteen hundred guilders paid for the "Night-watch" or five hundred guilders for a portrait are certainly high, as the buying power of the guilder in Rembrandt's day was equal to at least three dollars of our currency.

This did not preclude personal tragedy in the artistic world, for some of the greatest among the Dutch masters found even this semi-independent status incompatible with their artistic sentiments. Vermeer who could never produce in quantity, suffered terribly although his paintings brought high prices. Others failed through mismanagement of their financial affairs, either because temperamentally they never could make ends meet, or because they lived in too pretentious a style even when making good money. Rembrandt's attempt to rise above the level of common painters may have been looked upon askance, but his tragic downfall was by no means due to lack of appreciation on the part of his protectors. After his bankruptcy, he continued to receive many commissions, and in the documents of the time he was always referred to as a "painter of great renown." His individualism, his unflinching determination to picture things as he saw them, and not as conceived by others, inevitably created numerous difficulties, but he could rely on the admiration of many of his fellow countrymen for his art.

That many Netherlanders preferred the less wonderful but more accessible paintings of minor artists to those of the great master was natural enough. They were no mean connoisseurs of art, who appreciated Ferdinand Bol's work, and they never sank to the low level of the twentieth century's gullible masses. When he died, in 1669, Rembrandt did not hold first place among the Dutch masters in the eyes of his contemporaries, but his fame had spread all over Europe. Admiration of the Dutch school of painting rose so high that while formerly Holland had taken lessons from Italy, the reverse was now true. Italy and especially Rome had received many visitors from the Lowlands during the XVIIth century. Many works of Dutch artists—citizens of the Calvinist republic—still adorn the churches and palaces of the Papal City.

Architecture also added to the reputation of Netherland art in Europe. Dutch Renaissance, succeeded by the severe classicism of the middle of the century, set the style in large areas of northern Europe. The persecution of Alva caused the emigration of many Netherland architects. The economic relations of the northern Lowlands with the Baltic countries determined their paths of exile, and we find traces of them in East Friesland, in Denmark, and in Danzig. Increasing prosperity of the towns furthered the desire of town councilors and burgomasters in Holland to display the wealth of the citizens and the grandeur of the town in rich public build-

ings. This laudable pride on the part of a city government led to the construction of the town hall of Amsterdam. The project, designed and begun by Jacob van Campen, Lord Randenbroek, descendant of an aristocratic family in Amsterdam, and completed by Daniel Stalpaert and Pieter Post, was so monumental that the burgomasters had the work started without revealing its full magnitude to the councilors, lest it be rejected as too costly and ambitious. Begun in 1648, "the eighth wonder of the world" was so far completed after seven years that it could house the magistracy. For a century and a half it remained the seat of Amsterdam's government, to be handed over as a palace in 1808 to Louis Napoleon, king of Holland by the grace of his brother Napoleon. It is still in use as a royal residence, for which it is ill-suited, and a latent conflict over its ownership between the kingdom of the Netherlands and the city of Amsterdam was settled in favor of the former a few years ago.

Jacob van Campen's works were few in number. His successor as the leading Netherland architect was Pieter Post of Haarlem, builder of the Mauritshuis, formerly the palace of Johan Maurits of Nassau, governor of Brazil, and now a museum; of the marvelous town hall of Maastricht; and of the "House in the Woods," built for Frederick Henry of Orange-Nassau. Unlike Van Campen, Post had risen from the artisan class. His father is mentioned in the archives as a glass painter; and like so many architects, young Pieter began his career in a painter's studio. Like Van Campen, he was profoundly influenced in his architectural conceptions by French models, and French architects appear among his colleagues; but Netherland culture was far too vigorous to slavishly imitate foreign examples. Moreover, the commissions of architects in Holland and Zeeland were very different from those of architects of France. Orders for the building of palaces or châteaux were rare in the land of shopkeepers and seafarers, but there were numerous demands by wealthy merchants for the rebuilding of their town and country houses into solid and spacious private residences. The town house, with its gabled façade and its decorations in variegated stone, was the architect's usual subject. Rare were the occasions when a merchant, often more powerful than many a prince, wanted his might and opulence expressed in the scale and design of his dwelling. Opportunities to build churches were also rare. In many towns the Calvinist congregations found ample space in the magnificent churches built in earlier Catholic centuries. Amsterdam, with its rapidly growing population, was an exception. The *Westerkerk* of Amsterdam built by Hendrick de Keyser in 1620, is one of the best examples of this new ecclesiastical architecture, which represents a transition from the traditional type of Catholic church to a new form better adapted to Protestant forms of worship.

Netherland painting of the XVIIth century spread the fame of the country throughout Europe and even to the courts of Asiatic potentates. Netherland architecture did the same on a smaller scale. Here for once, war worked constructively instead of destructively. Maurice and Frederick Henry had made the Netherland army famous, especially for its fortifications. Between them and the Spanish commanders a fierce competition raged in the construction of defenses that could withstand the destructive power of artillery, as also in developing new forces of destruction. Netherland engineers, led by men of genius like Simon Stevin, won and the whole of Europe sought to profit by their work. Friendly Protestant powers asked the prince of Orange for engineers and architects who, sent out for war work, often found more useful employment in building palaces and churches or constructing bridges and improving the public highways of foreign towns. Of these engineers some went to Sweden and some to northern Germany, where Frederick William of Hohenzollern, son-in-law of Prince Frederick Henry, sought to derive every possible benefit from this fortunate family relation.

If painting and architecture, socially speaking, were trades carried on by skilled artisans, literature was a pastime, rarely a profession. There are a few cases in the history of XVIIth century Netherland letters, in which poets were supported by groups of patrons for art's sake. Jan Janszoon Starter was one of these. An Englishman by birth, he grew up in Amsterdam where he moved in literary circles before going to Leeuwarden, capital of Friesland, where he started a bookselling and publishing business, striving hard to promote the art of letters in a petty and rather bourgeois environment. Having failed, he returned to Amsterdam, where he received a pension from a group of admirers, on condition that he produce a certain number of poems annually. Such agreements are difficult to fulfill, and Starter finally did what in those days a Netherlander only did as a last resource: he joined one of the many mercenary armies as a quartermaster and died in faraway Hungary.

Starter's life is an exception in Dutch literary history. Gerbrand Adriaenszoon Breero, son of a shoemaker and himself a student of painting and lieutenant of the City Guards—ability to hold one's own in a beer drinking bout was more necessary for this function than military experience—was also bohemian in his way of living, but he felt entirely at home in his native Amsterdam and among the co-citizens of whom he drew striking pen pictures in his comedies and poems. He was no artist basking in the favor of society, but the embodiment of the popular spirit of the Amsterdam of his time. As such he provides illuminating historical evidence, most necessary to those who might otherwise see the XVIIth century Netherlands

only through the works of Jacob Cats, the most widely read of all the authors of his age and the most satisfied with his own work and the world he lived in. All other men of letters of the time, among them such famous names as Joost van den Vondel, Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, Constantijn Huyghens—adopted literature as a “pastime” albeit a very serious one to which Hooft at least, devoted most of his time and none of them failed to see a great cultural and national asset.

The goal they set themselves was to adapt the essence of classical literary tradition to Netherland surroundings and to create in their northern, Dutch-speaking republic a narrative tradition equal to that of Rome. The pure Latin of Cicero was to be matched by the purity of their native Dutch; the political wisdom of Tacitus’ historical works was to find its counterpart in Dutch descriptions of the Great Revolt; the comedies of Plautus depicting every-day life in Rome were to be surpassed by the picture of Amsterdam’s people as they lived and loved and thought. The best of this classical Dutch literary culture was to express profoundly Christian feelings and thoughts, in fulfillment of Erasmus’ dream of a world purified from party strife with Christian learning rejuvenated through the critical adaptation of the best classical civilizations had to offer. Netherland men of letters strove earnestly and diligently for this ideal, laboring to perfect their own knowledge and means of expression, training themselves by translating the classics, by paraphrasing the best of ancient comedy and poetry in Dutch verse, by assiduously studying their own language. Modern Dutch is to a large extent their creation. It was they who fought the infiltration of many superfluous French words of the Burgundian period which had threatened to overcrowd the native vocabulary. Not needing to fear German encroachment, they preferred to borrow a word from the Low or High German, if no other way of supplanting the French was possible and if the German word seemed understandable to the masses. They explored the inexhaustible treasures of Amsterdam’s popular language and added them to the many expressions already introduced from Flanders and Brabant, which had once held the lead in literature.

Hooft used this new linguistic instrument to set forth, in the form of historical narratives, the political ideals of the oligarchic republic, while Vondel chronicled its greatness, its internal strife, its victories over its enemies in a thousand poems. Late in life he started his Latin studies afresh, better to observe his classical examples. Unpretentious, with deep respect for contemporaries whom he far surpassed in the depth of his literary conceptions and his mastery of the language, this shopkeeper of lower middleclass truly represents the humanistic Netherland civilization of his age. The wide range of his political, religious, and cultural interests

shows how great a place the small nation on the North Sea then held in general culture.

In all these fields of art, the province of Holland took the lead. Some literary figures had their homes in other provinces, notably in Zeeland; some painters came from that province or from Utrecht; but in all fields, Holland was easily predominant. And in Holland, Amsterdam, the home of Rembrandt, Breero, Hooft and Vondel was first. Haarlem, where Frans Hals lived and worked, where Van Campen and Pieter Post were born, was an honorable second. Clearly was there a connection between the sudden spread of wealth and the spirit of enterprise in this one province, and the cultural activity there. It was not wealth in itself that caused the arts to flourish, for as Holland grew richer, its artistic productivity diminished in quantity and quality. Vondel survived all of the other standard bearers of the arts; and when he died in 1679, the great days had passed.

The other provinces underwent a cultural conquest by Holland. "Overlandish," the local form of Low German, was the literary language of the northeastern provinces in the last decades of the XVIth century. The representatives of the Calvinist congregations of Drente, when invited in 1618 to the national Synod of Dordrecht, asked to be excused, "the Netherland language not being very well known in their province." Hollandish, in the typical form given to it around 1600, although not unmixed with Brabant forms, became the official language of all the provinces before 1650. In 1619 the Synod of Dordrecht had ordered the Bible translated into Dutch. This was by no means the first Dutch version of the Old and New Testaments, but it was the first to receive official sanction and to be propagated by the Church. The first task of the translators appointed by the Synod was to establish a number of grammatical and orthographic rules in order to ensure uniformity which otherwise would have been sorely lacking in a work composed by natives of different provinces. The committee did not hesitate to create new grammatical and idiomatic forms whenever this seemed desirable, and some of the novelties they introduced became part and parcel of everyday Dutch. In this way the Staten Bible, so called because the States-General sponsored its publication, became one of the strongest factors in the linguistic unification of the small but heterogeneous territory. In Friesland, where the ancient Frisian language was still spoken, the linguistic influence of Holland caused a difference between the language of the towns and that of the countryside, *Stad-friesch* (urban Frisian) and *Land-friesch* (rural Frisian), and with the progress of time, the Frisian tongue more and more adapted itself to the language of the intellectual class of the nation.

In all these aspects of culture, Holland was dominant. In the field of learning the provinces, even the towns, sought jealously to safeguard their



independence. Holland had had its university at Leiden since 1575. Originally planned as an academy for the education of Calvinist ministers, its formal purpose became "unhampered, public instruction in theology, law and medicine, also in philosophy and other liberal arts, as well as in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages." Several of the other provinces, jealous of the religious independence guaranteed them by the Union of Utrecht, decided to have their own schools of theology. Friesland founded the university of Franckerker in 1585; Stad en Landen, that of Groningen in 1614; Utrecht established its own in 1636; and Guelderland, in 1648 in Harderwijk. Zeeland and Overijssel never had universities of their own. The city of Deventer in Overijssel, like Amsterdam and other cities, maintained an *Athenaeum* or *Illustrious School*, in which higher instruction, not ranking with that of the universities, was given. In these schools and universities, men who have a permanent place in the annals of learning taught students from all over northern Europe. Daniel Heinsius, Gerard and Isaac Vossius (Netherlanders), Joseph Scaliger and Claudius Salmasius (both born in France), Johannes Gronovius (born in Germany) were the standard bearers of the classics. In their classes Latin and Greek were taught not only for the value of the languages and their literature but also as an introduction to the fields of history and political science. The Tacitus courses at Leiden took the place of our courses in government and diplomacy.

One name is missing in the academy of Netherland learning, and that the greatest of them all: Hugo Grotius. Driven from his country in 1619, the great scholar vainly attempted to obtain permission to return. That permission would have been granted if Grotius had been willing to retract his support of Oldenbarnevelt. This he rightly refused to do. Once he came back to Rotterdam in the hope that the authorities would ignore his presence, but within a few days he was forced to flee again. There was no place in the Netherlands for this greatest of its scholars. The author of the treatise on the Freedom of the Seas (*Mare liberum*, published in 1609) and of the *Apology of the Christian Religion*, which ran to one hundred and ten editions and was translated into most European languages, had to do his later work outside his fatherland, under the protection of the kings of France and Sweden. In France he wrote his most important work: *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (On the Laws of War and Peace), a compendium of learned references to the righteousness of war, a problem that has tortured human conscience throughout the ages. His rational conception of the problem and its basic philosophic principles were new which made his book a standard work for future generations, and provided common basis of reason for people who had drifted apart forever in religious thinking.

Few Netherlanders have added so much to the fame of their homeland as did Grotius, and none enjoyed such a reputation among his contemporaries. At the age of sixty-two he died in Rostock on his way from Sweden to Paris where he had served as Swedish ambassador. The pusillanimity of his opponents kept Grotius out of his native land, but if he had returned from exile his character might have involved him in difficulties that might have shorn him of some of the glory that is his. Although physically separated from his native land, he remained close to it spiritually. Until his last years he worked on his great *History of the Netherland War*, written in the style of Tacitus, and entered into polemics with Netherland authors on matters of theology. Only five years after his death, the political group whose principles he had so tenaciously defended regained control in Holland, and his body was finally brought back and buried with his ancestors in Delft.

Oriental studies occupied a distinct place in Netherland scholarship of this period. To penetrate more deeply into the mysteries of the ancient Hebrew world and the origins of the Christian religion, Aramaean, Syrian, Chaldean, and Arabic were studied. A knowledge of the last language rapidly proved of practical value. Dutch connections with North Africa and the Levant were frequent, and a knowledge of the Arabic language was useful wherever Mohammedanism had spread, in Persia, India, and the Malay Archipelago. Leiden University was the second institution of higher learning to establish a separate chair of Arabic, Paris having been the first. Scaliger, already mentioned as a great teacher of Greek and Latin, was among the promoters of these new studies. Leiden was lucky to have as professor of Hebrew Raphelengius, a scholarly printer who equipped his presses to publish books in Oriental languages. Thomas Erpenius and Jacob Golius continued the work of these men and made Leiden the principal center of Arabic scholarship. To the credit of Holland's burgher aristocracy, so often accused of crude materialism, be it said that through the endeavors of Erpenius and the assistance of the oligarchy, the States General were persuaded to ask the "king" of Morocco, one of their more dubious allies, to send an expert to teach the Leiden scholars colloquial Arabic.

Botany was a part of the study of medicine, for herbs were then the basic material for the preparation of drugs. Charles l'Ecluse (Carolus Clusius) made the Botanic Garden of Leiden University one of the best equipped institutions of its kind. Simon Stevin and Willibrord Snellius, whose name is still connected with the law of optical refraction, taught mathematics and physics. In a country of seafarers astronomy, geography and navigation, as well as all instruments serving any purpose in these fields, were bound to

attract special attention. We find Zacharias Janszoon, or Janse of Middelburg, mentioned as the inventor of the spy-glass. A series of great geographers were connected either by birth or occupation with the Netherlands. Gerard Mercator, born in Antwerp, belongs wholly to the southern Low Countries; but Jodocus Hondius, his fellow townsman, was one of the cartographers attracted by the intensity of geographic studies in Amsterdam, and moved there to publish Mercator's Atlas. Willem Janszoon Blaeu founded a map publishing house which produced the Atlas that made his name famous by its careful and artistic execution.

In this world of feverish literary and scientific activity, erratic characters were bound to appear. Over-wrought by the progress made on every hand, they thought the time had come for a final solution of all problems. Among them was Cornelis Drebbel with his fantastic schemes for the manufacture of a *perpetuum mobile*, and his submarine, which according to some reports functioned marvelously well in the river Thames, and according to others only succeeded in diving and never coming up again. The pride of Netherland students in the pre-eminent position of their country in natural science make them "nationalist" even in this the least national of all fields. This led to the development of a more accurate Netherland terminology in mathematics than existed in any other language. It was created by Simon Stevin. Although the high place held by the Dutch language in international intercourse was a source of national pride, a knowledge of French, Spanish, and Italian was quite common among educated people. That of English and German was not so frequent but still rather general. The studying of so many languages bred a vague idea of the relationships existing between them. Raphelengius called the attention of the learned world to this fact. Three Netherlanders, Justus Lipsius, Franciscus Junius, and Isaac Vossius were leaders in the rediscovery of the old Frankish, old Anglo-Saxon, and old Gothic languages. They opened a new field of scholarly research, thus destroying a marvelous legend that was springing from the over-confidence of the young Lowland nation: that Dutch being so beautiful, so easy to handle, and such a good medium for the study of foreign languages, must be the oldest of all languages. Jan van Gorp, physician at Antwerp, a native of North Brabant, had given currency to that legend in the XVIth century, arguing with great weight and seriousness that Dutch had been spoken by Adam and Eve in Paradise.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Netherlands as a Great Power

THE armistice of 1609 established the international position of the Netherland Republic. The subsequent years of truce strengthened the new state's position, partly because of its increasing economic power; partly because of the decline of adjacent kingdoms. Great Britain, united under King James I, was in the pangs of a long constitutional conflict. France was torn by internal dissension until the reins of government were seized by Richelieu; and for years after his ascent to power he was obliged to act cautiously and to avoid open conflict with foreign powers. Spain was involved in the Thirty Years' War by which the German Empire was torn apart. A rising power like Sweden that owed so much to Netherland capitalism, had to heed the views of a Republic whose navy controlled the entire Baltic area. The general situation in Europe in the first quarter of the seventeenth century was favorable to the United Provinces, but they took no advantage of it to widen their political influence. Trade, not long-range national views, determined the foreign policy of the burgher-aristocracy. The Netherlands suffer to this day from this narrow though explicable lack of vision of their leaders.

In 1609 just as the Twelve Years' Truce was signed, the duke of Cleve, Mark, Berg, and Juliers died without leaving a direct heir. This Rhine-land federation had played an important part in Netherland history in the XVth and XVIth centuries. Guelderland had narrowly escaped absorption by it and only the military power of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty had saved that province for the Lowland Union. Ties between the Low Countries and Cleve and Juliers had remained close. In the last years before the Truce the war had been carried into this area. Netherland and Spanish garrisons had occupied Emmerik, Rees, Rheinberg, and Wesel. In the confusion created by the extinction of the Cleve dynasty, a strong tendency had manifested itself among the inhabitants for association with the Netherland Republic. The States General were unwilling to listen to any such suggestions. Although forced to intervene to prevent the principalities passing to a pro-Spanish Catholic, they stubbornly refused even to consider the incorporation of part of them into the Republic. The merchants of Holland who at heart considered the "land-provinces" more a burden than

an asset and who were over-confident that their financial power would permit them to build up an adequate defense at any time, deliberately neglected this opportunity to strengthen the Republic's eastern boundary. In those days no national or linguistic difference stood in the way of a part of the Lower Rhineland becoming Netherland territory. But the sea-provinces had become one of the western European powers, and the war had so widened the gap between the Netherland sea-provinces and a disintegrated Germany, that the gentlemen of Amsterdam and Dordrecht simply overlooked the possibility of their national boundaries being threatened from the east. The land provinces were there to serve as a protective cushion for Holland and that, in their opinion, was nearly all the land-provinces were good for.

Thus, the Republic let pass the golden opportunity. Instead of heeding the appeal of the pro-Dutch elements in Cleve and Juliers, the Netherlanders backed the Protestant candidate to part of the inheritance, including the duchy of Cleve and the small seigneuries of Huissen and Zevenaar situated east and west of the Rhine, well within Netherland territory on the strategic approaches to the heart of the country. This Protestant candidate was none other than the prince-elect of Brandenburg, duke of Prussia, of the House of Hohenzollern. It was no fault of Holland's burgher-aristocracy if the invaders of 1940 were not able to start their aggression from a even more advanced position than they actually had. Worse, the incorporation of Cleve into an East-Elbian principality created a linguistic and cultural boundary a few miles east of Nijmegen that had never before existed.

One reason why the leaders of the Republic were indifferent, was that they could not think of themselves as a great power in international politics. They realized too well as Oldenbarnevelt said that France and Great Britain had to be treated "respectfully" being "incomparably more powerful" than the Netherlands because of their *potential* resources and their stronger centralized government. Their foreign policy was the logical outcome of their realization of the potential power of their western neighbors. They sought to maintain good relations with France and Britain, but dreaded to commit themselves to close alliance with either. They resisted Spain, but were little inclined to renew the war and fight to the bitter end to drive Spain from all of the Low Countries. If closely scrutinized this policy reveals itself as a return to the cherished neutrality, which had been the ideal of the Burgundian-Lowland aristocracy in the days of Maximilian and Charles V and at the beginning of King Philip's reign. Now, however, neutrality had to be dynamic so that any threat to Netherland independence or to the freedom of her commerce could be anticipated and prevented.

There was little chance for neutrality in 1621, when the Twelve Years' Truce came to an end. The Spanish-Austrian forces had gained their first successes in the Thirty Years' War. The Republic, remaining too much on the defensive saw its outposts south of the riverbelt conquered or threatened. In 1625 the death of Maurice of Nassau, aged beyond his years, seemed another blow to the Netherlands. Actually it proved helpful for it gave free scope to the ability of his younger brother Frederick Henry, who was eager to gain military laurels and more tractable in his dealings with the ruling oligarchy.<sup>37</sup> A new series of victories began: the liberation of the last towns held by the Spaniards in the eastern provinces; then in 1629 the conquest of 's Hertogenbosch, which the enemy could not prevent even though Imperial troops came to the assistance of their Spanish allies and invaded the Netherlands right up to the boundary of Holland. The year 1632 gave promise of even greater successes. A revolutionary movement seemed imminent among the aristocracy of the southern Low Countries, and a revival of the alliance of 1576, the Pacification of Ghent, did not seem impossible. In a few weeks the prince of Orange conquered the towns on the Meuse, including Maastricht. In vain the Spaniards and their Imperial allies under Count Pappenheim, the famous cavalry leader in Wallenstein's army, stormed his trenches outside the town. With the loss of Maastricht direct communication between the Spanish Netherlands and western Germany was cut, but the revolution in the South came to nothing.

This campaign and the prospect of a revolt against Spain in Flanders and Brabant forced the leaders of the Republic to define their attitude towards the possible liberation of the southern provinces. Complete liberation of the South might prove impossible, but the future southern boundary of the Netherlands would depend on the outcome of the campaign. No linguistic or other barriers existed, until far to the south. The framers of Netherland policy had an opportunity to include in the growing Dutch nation as many of the old Lowland inhabitants as reasonably possible. Once more, they let the opportunity pass. Commercial interests might be harmed if Antwerp were freed, and those interests predominated. They even prevented conquered territories from being treated as free members of the republican community. The fate of towns in Brabant and the Meuse districts left no illusion about the egotism of the seven provinces. The population was deprived of self-government in all conquered areas, except the town of Maastricht where peculiar constitutional conditions made this impossible. Deprived of freedom in matters of taxation and religion, they were subject to the arbitrary decisions of the States General. All this created violent antipathy in the South against the North, and the Northerners felt disinclined to burden themselves with large territories which could only

be held by military occupation. The South, more Catholic than ever under the influence of the Counter-Reformation, hated Calvinist supremacy. The North, although relatively tolerant in its own territory, could not have proclaimed general and complete freedom of worship without shaking its own state to its foundations.

The problem of the southern provinces became acute in 1635. The war was growing into a world conflict. The fate of Europe was to be decided on the battlefields of Germany, that of America and Asia in Brazil, Ceylon and Malaya. In this gigantic struggle the Republic of the Netherlands was only one, though one of the most important, belligerents. Minor interests had to give way to the needs of grand strategy. The West India Company after an initial failure, had struck a major blow at the enemy in 1628 by the capture of a Spanish silver fleet off Matanzas. The eleven million guilders booty of this successful if somewhat inglorious encounter, made Admiral Piet Heyn the best remembered of all Dutch naval heroes. His glory is sung on the streets today. He himself complained that nobody had paid any attention to victories he had won in hard-fought battles, but that everybody cheered his capture of defenceless merchantmen. He fell a few years later, fighting Spanish privateers, yet few people remember his heroic death. The directors of the Company divided the booty—a bonus for themselves, a nice dividend for the shareholders, a large percentage for the prince of Orange, a very small one for Piet Heyn, a tip for the common sailors. Some of the gains were earmarked for further expeditions, but the war chests of the Republic profited little from the victory. In 1630, Pernambuco was conquered and part of Brazil subjected to Dutch rule. In 1634 Curacao was wrested from the Spaniards, and became a center of slave smuggling to the Spanish Main. Whatever its ultimate result the founding of New Amsterdam (New York) as a center for the Hudson fur trade was unimportant in the eyes of the directors, whose great aim was to crush all Portuguese power in Brazil and West Africa and to dominate the Caribbean. In Asia, the Portuguese were driven from the Persian Gulf; their strongholds in Ceylon and southern India were stormed; and with the conquest of Malacca in 1641, they were expelled from the East Indian Archipelago.

In Europe, King Gustávus Adolphus of Sweden, backed by Dutch capital, had marched against the Austrian-Spanish armies and gained many victories, before he met his death on the battlefield of Luetzen. The Austrian-Spanish combination, unbelievably tenacious in spite of terrific losses and a constant lack of money, recovered from the blows inflicted by the Swedish king; and its armies again swept northward through Germany. To avoid complete disaster to the anti-Habsburg coalition, the Netherlands and

France who for years had been backing this coalition were forced to come into the open and wage all out war. So in 1635, the Netherland Republic and France entered into an alliance directed against Spain. All Spanish positions in northern Europe were to be reduced, and the Austrian armies forced back to southeastern Germany. With some hesitation the States General agreed to a plan for the conquest of the southern provinces by a combined Dutch-French army, and the subsequent division of this territory between the two powers.

This plan miscarried. Against an attempt at subjugation, by people who ostensibly came as liberators, a national movement developed in the South, which may be called the first really "Belgian" movement. Frederick Henry did not conquer a single southern city; but he lost some of the recently captured strongholds along the Meuse, such as Venlo and Roermond. An attack on Antwerp succeeded no better. Again, only the sea power of the Netherlands prevented the Spanish counter-attacks from far outweighing the Netherland assault. A strong naval force dispatched from Spain to Flanders was intercepted by Dutch squadrons, the first command of Maarten Harpertszoon Tromp, the famous admiral of Holland, and annihilated in the battle of the Downs (1639) in British territorial waters over the futile protest of King Charles.

After these years of intense exertion, lassitude overcame the Netherland leaders. Frederick Henry, highly honored by the States General and by foreign powers, wanted to continue the war. Overestimating his influence in affairs of state, feeling himself a member of European royalty through his son's marriage with a daughter of the king of England, he was inclined to follow a personal foreign policy, at variance with the wishes of the Regents and the merchant class of Holland. The burgher aristocrats brought to power by the fall of Oldenbarnevelt, almost imperceptibly drifted back into the policy of the grand pensionary whom they replaced. Gradually a new conflict for supremacy was arising between the province of Holland and the House of Orange, which represented the interprovincial forces. Basically, the question was whether the Republic should take only enough part in European politics to assure the safety of Holland and Zeeland and their maritime trading routes, or whether it should aspire to permanent influence in northwestern Europe, and carry on a war that would lead to territorial aggrandizement, the commercial importance of which was not apparent. To put it plainly, it was a conflict between a policy of limited participation in European affairs merely to secure independence and a policy of active participation in shaping the destinies of Europe. The prince of Orange naturally inclined to the latter; the merchants of Holland, to the former. The prince wanted to give at least moral and



financial support to his son's father-in-law, King Charles, in his struggle against the armies of the Parliament. The States of Holland would rather have supported Parliament. If they did not do so, it was to profit by England's temporary weakness and settle other European affairs according to their own commercial interest.

For the first time in 1645, a Netherland fleet policed the Sund to keep the straits open for Dutch shipping while Sweden and Denmark were at war. The merchants of Holland saw no reason to continue a war with Spain that could serve only the interest of France. Austria and Spain were exhausted, the German Empire ruined, Sweden unable to force a decision. France alone was growing in strength and sending her armies ever farther into central Europe. It hardly seemed necessary for the Republic to fight the king of France's war. Spain, well aware of this attitude of the Dutch republic, made great concessions to the Netherlands to separate them from France. During the protracted negotiation, Frederick Henry died in 1647. Immediately Holland took the lead and against the votes of Zeeland, Friesland and Utrecht, and the wishes of the new stadhouder, William II, persuaded the majority of the States General to make peace with Spain and sign the Treaty of Muenster (1648). This treaty recognized the existing boundary between the northern and southern Low Countries, leaving the northern districts of Flanders and Brabant and the town of Maastricht under the control of the States General. This treaty further guaranteed the Netherlands all the possessions they had acquired in the East and West Indies, and permitted them to keep the Scheldt closed so as to control the overseas trade of the southern provinces. The official recognition of the independence of the Republic was a mere formality, as was the promise of Spain to secure identical recognition from the Emperor and the Imperial Diet. The former complied, the latter did not, which altered nothing in the existing situation.

The peace treaty was a triumph for the Republic over Spain and for Holland over the other provinces and over the prince of Orange. In a way it was a triumph for the city of Amsterdam over the rest of the Republic. The treaty re-established the supremacy of the burgher oligarchy, broken thirty years before by Prince Maurice. Thus it inevitably led to a new outbreak of the constitutional conflict. William II, young, ambitious, intelligent and contemptuous of the Dutch middleclass way of life, sought to seize the reins that had fallen from his father's hands. The young prince wanted a bold and vigorous foreign policy by which the Republic would take sides with the kings of England and France against their enemies: Parliament in England, Spain on the Continent. He did not hesitate to resort to armed force to break the opposition of Holland's leaders. Laying

siege to Amsterdam, he made the proud burgher-aristocracy bow to the storm, but that was all he achieved. Outwardly victorious in this internal conflict, William moderated his ambitions because he knew that he could never force the towns to provide the money his enterprises would require. In the hour of his triumph he had to permit Amsterdam to strengthen its fortification, for better future defense against the Republic's commander-in-chief. Death prevented an aggravation of the conflict. In 1650, when only twenty, William died suddenly. An heir to the House of Orange was born a few days after his death. His widow, an embittered royal princess, who felt out of place in the bourgeois world, and who, after Cromwell's victory in England, was merely the sister of a pretender, possessed neither the character nor the ability to uphold the great tradition of the House of Orange.

The victory of the burgher-aristocracy was complete, so complete that the Regents of Holland thought the time ripe to draw the logical conclusion of the revolution of 1581. Sixty years previously, the Netherlands had rejected the authority of their king but had left his lieutenant, the stadhouder, in office. The war of liberation had enhanced the office of stadhouder and made it hereditary in the House of Orange. Now the opportunity offered to put this ambitious family of would-be monarchs back where it belonged, in the opinion of the burgher aristocrats, as merely prominent citizens of the Republic. The States of Holland decided to appoint no successor to the late stadhouder, either in his civilian or military offices. The States General were to command the army and navy, which meant in practice that the army fell apart into seven small corps, and the navy into three units. The last remaining institutions of central authority were broken. There was to be freedom and equality for all citizens and for all provinces, which meant that citizens who and provinces which exceeded the others in wealth and power, were to dominate. The theory was beautiful but the practice quite different. The Netherland Republic was transformed into a Hollandish State—the province of Holland with dependencies, some of which it treated respectably, others ignominiously.<sup>38</sup>

The second half of the XVIIth century is in some ways, the most glorious period of Netherland history. It lacks the brilliance of the fifty preceding years; it did not produce such great or so many artists; but it saw the ripening of the fruit that had been flowering. In those five decades the Netherland nation—the product of social, political, and geographic circumstances and of the individual efforts of hundreds of years—took definite shape and character. After 1672, when it had passed through the ordeal of hostile aggression aimed at its total destruction, its permanence seemed assured and its place in the European world determined. Glorious as is the history of these fifty years, it nevertheless reveals definite shortcomings in the social

and political structure of the nation. These not only spoil the "artistic" effect of the historical picture, they also had grave consequences which ultimately proved as dangerous to the life of the nation as had been hostility of foreign powers.

After 1650, republican liberty, the "True and Only Liberty," obtained in the Netherlands; but Liberty was rather arbitrarily interpreted. The theory was that all the provinces were allies of equal rank, that all public offices were granted only to "Virtue," to quote John De Witt, never to wealth or rank; that all consciences were free and no one was to be persecuted for his religious opinions, that arbitrary or corrupt officials would not be tolerated. In a word, that "Tyranny" would never again be felt in the Seven Provinces, that Law and Justice would rule. Audacious political writers added that the "True and Only Liberty" (the term was used by the burgher-aristocrats to describe the Netherland constitution after the downfall of the House of Orange) would not be completely realized unless freedom not only of conscience but also of worship were granted, and unless all restrictions on economic activity, such as guilds and privileged trade companies, were abolished. These were extreme opinions, however, never publicly sponsored by the leading group among the burgher-aristocrats. The reality was quite different.<sup>39</sup>

Only "Virtue" qualified for office, De Witt had said. Apparently a very small group of Netherlanders held a monopoly of "Virtue"; for in practice offices were never granted except to relatives, friends, or protégés of office holders. De Witt's father had said, "The burgher is a small fellow, and must be kept small." It was on this principle that the burgher-aristocracy acted. The ruling oligarchy grew more and more self-centered. In these same decades the first "contracts of correspondence (*contracten van correspondentie*) were concluded—agreements by which a few families controlling town governments agreed to secure the benefits of their position to their relatives and descendants and to divide all lucrative offices among the various parties so that each in turn would have a chance to profit from the public institutions. The oligarchies of different towns supported each other and if necessary exercised political pressure to exclude undesirable newcomers from office. The Grand Pensionary De Witt himself controlled the States of Holland largely through his personal connections, especially among the ruling cliques of Amsterdam. The rule of "equality for all" was violated, not only in public administration but even in social life. The ruling caste so far segregated itself from the middle class that it virtually formed a new nobility, hence the somewhat childish endeavors of the oligarchs to buy country estates, titles of which they loved to assume.

Thanks to the Erasmian tradition, the new nobility were liberal minded but their liberalism sometimes seemed more negative than positive. Their policy was based not on the conviction that every individual had certain rights and freedoms, but rather on the determination not to allow any pressure group to dominate in the political field. During the whole of the XVIIth century Calvinist synods lodged complaints against "Popish impudence," the recurrence of secret Catholic worship. The States had officially forbidden this but tacitly permitted it for the benefit of the police who levied a heavy, unofficial tax on the Catholics. As time progressed the States grew more and more resentful of this pressure from the official Church, and finally forbade the Calvinist synods to bring any further complaints. They allowed the Jews to practice their own religion, but as soon as the Jewish communities dared to approach the "Noble and Mighty Lords" of Holland for exoneration from certain rules they considered oppressive, strict conformity to establish regulations was demanded. The States referred a protest by the Synod of southern Holland against the teaching of philosophy, in particular the philosophy of Descartes, to the faculty of Leiden University, but when one of the professors included his "minority opinion," the States indignantly returned the report with the remark that no professor should ever dare offer his personal opinion to the High Assembly without being asked. Having thus put the learned gentleman in his place, and received a purified version of the report, they ordered theologians and philosophers to confine themselves to their own field of learning; they forbade philosophers to enter the field of theology or to make use of arguments taken from the Bible; they forbade the reading or discussion of Descartes' books in the classroom; and last but not least, they ordered all university professors to refrain from exchanging insulting remarks, from criticizing each other's views, from abusing one another's characters. The Noble and Mighty Lords probably knew that their delimitation of the fields of theology and philosophy lacked precision and needed some further elucidation. In their conception of liberalism, the difficulty was easily met by enforcing moderation of opinion on both sides.

Likewise the States, instead of accepting the principle of freedom of worship, as urged for commercial reasons by Peter De la Court, the author of a treatise *The Interest of Holland*, contented themselves with permitting moderate liberty in this field subject to heavy payments for the benefit of the ruling class. The burgher-aristocrats of the second half of the XVIIth century may have been more convinced Calvinists than those of the first half, but even so they dreaded theocracy more than any other form of "Tyranny." Here again, aversion to theocracy rather than sympathy for liberty seems to have been the source of their toleration. However, in one

respect, their tolerance was positive and that was the freedom of the press. Without the liberal attitude of the States, Holland could never have become as it did, the center of European book production in the later XVIIth century. Occasionally certain books were banned, but such cases were rare exceptions. Peter De la Court's "Interest of Holland" was banned for its extreme views but this did not prevent its being circulated all over the country. The Church of southern Holland had demanded the suppression of the book, but they would hardly have achieved their aim if De la Court's views on foreign policy had not been just as unorthodox as his opinions on religious tolerance. Baruch de Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologo-Politicus* was not forbidden, until the reactionary days of 1672, although the same Synod called it a "dirty and truly blasphemous book." Freedom of opinion and conscience were fairly secure; freedom of worship was tacitly allowed. Although many Dutch Catholics were inclined by tradition and because of the unjust exploitation of their insecure legal status, to look to the Catholic monarchs of Europe as their natural protectors, the greatest of them all, the poet Vondel, was also the greatest of Dutch patriots. The boasted equality of opportunity did not exist, except in the navy and in commerce. In spite of this drawback, the amount of popular freedom enjoyed in the Netherlands was great enough to make near-by peoples envious.

The second edition of De la Court's book, published in 1669, contains a remarkable chapter in which the author explains that the province of Holland need not fear the possible hostility of the other members of the Union. This could be understood to mean simply that Holland did not *need* the other provinces. It would be sufficient, he wrote, to dig a large, deep moat, separating Holland from Utrecht, or, as Utrecht was an agricultural district bound to live or perish with Holland, on the boundary of Utrecht and Guelderland. This moat, a substitute for a permanent line of inundations, would make Holland forever invincible. The Grand Pensionary De Witt had objected to the publication of this singular theory in the first edition of the book. Actual plans to dig such a moat never existed, but the theory accurately reflects a way of thinking quite common among Holland's aristocracy. To them, the eastern provinces were a financial burden. Holland would have to pay the majority of the troops if an army were needed to protect them. They contributed only a nominal amount to the equipment of the navy. They differed economically and culturally from the western coastland. For the Hollander, the peoples of Overijssel and Drente were *moffen*, a slur applied by Lowlanders in the sixteenth century to German mercenary soldiers and later extended to all Germans or, as in this case, to all "Easterners." The penniless country squire of Drente was the buffoon of the Amsterdam stage. In the opinion of many Hollanders, the cause of

the eastern provinces was not that of the coastal lands. Amsterdam protested vehemently when De Witt took this interest to heart and sought to protect Overijssel from aggression by preventing militarist expansion in some of the West German principalities. Not unnaturally, this narrow selfishness of Holland's ruling class, a combination of snobbery and political egotism, caused resentment. For the first time the rule of the burgher-aristocracy was really hated, despite the fact that in general it fostered prosperity. The mere idea that a small group of individuals, mostly related by family ties, could dominate the States of Holland and through them the Republic, sufficed to anger the Dutch middle classes. The fact that they themselves were growing ever more prosperous as a result of the successful policy of the ruling class only increased their resentment at being excluded from political offices. Because of the general antagonism of the masses, of the army, of a large part of the navy, and of many oligarchs in the northern provinces, the domination of the ruling group was never very stable. The slightest reverse on the field of battle, at sea, in foreign policy, brought demands that Prince William III be restored to the position of his ancestors. During the twenty-two years (1650-1672) that the oligarchs ruled without check or competition, they had to be constantly on guard against Orangist movements.

Thus, for twenty-two years, a small group of men decided the policy of the States of Holland and of the Union. Their power was backed by no strong police or armed force obedient to their orders, but only by the prestige of success. So long as trade and shipping kept all hands busy and all minds occupied, their position was secure. But in the ultimate analysis, their position depended upon the ability of a single man, the Grand Pensionary John De Witt. William Temple, the British statesman, called him "the perfect Hollander" and no better description of his personality is possible, for he possessed most of the virtues and few of the weaknesses of his class. Born in Dordrecht of an old family of merchants who had become prominent in the magistracy during the revolution of 1572, De Witt had received the kind of education then common among the aristocracy of Holland. He attended elementary and "illustrious" schools, where he received a sound classical training and was taught the principles of mathematics, a field of learning in which he always showed special interest. He learned French and some English and German; he received lessons in music and fencing. At sixteen he went to Leiden University, where he studied law. Four years later he left for his *Grand Tour*, then considered an indispensable part of a gentleman's education. With his brother he visited Paris and Angers, through southern France he traveled to Geneva, back to Paris, and then, via Calais, to England. Oxford was duly visited in

1645, but more attention was paid to the internal political situation of England, where King Charles had fallen into the hands of his enemies.

Back home, John De Witt began his career as a lawyer at the Hague, then as pensionary of his native town. At the Hague, where his practice of law apparently left him plenty of leisure, he worked assiduously at mathematical problems and composed his treatise on conic sections (*Elementa curvarum linearum*, first published in 1659 by one of his friends), which a modern historian of science has called "the first textbook of analytical geometry." The third section of this treatise showed that he had completely mastered the new mathematical theories of Descartes. Law and mathematics however left him time for poetry. Here art was put to practical use: De Witt's literary production was limited to more or less conventional love poems written for the young ladies of his social circle. In those early years of his public career he did not move in the highest circles at the Hague. The prince of Orange's court still dominated all society and there was no place among the high and mighty members of royal or noble families for the son of a burgomaster of Dordrecht, a stubborn defender of the "liberties" of the burgher-aristocracy. John's father was among the six members of the States of Holland arrested and imprisoned by order of the Stadhouder in 1650; and the death of Prince William II was a triumph for the De Witt family and its political associates. A few months later John De Witt became pensionary of Dordrecht, and in July 1653 was appointed grand pensionary of the States of Holland. His powers explicitly included all the prerogatives formerly enjoyed by Oldenbarnevelt and since the death of that great man strictly withheld from his successors. The highest circles at the Hague, somewhat nonplussed by the sudden eclipse of the glory of the House of Orange, no longer shunned this brilliant city aristocrat, and we find him a member of the "Brotherhood of the Knights of Joy" which counted among its members noble ladies of the Houses of Nassau and of Brederode.

The young grand pensionary, only twenty-eight when he assumed his responsible post, remained the undisputed leader of the Republic's foreign policy until the catastrophe of 1672. Precise and clear in his style, prudent and sometimes over-cautious in his diplomacy, perfectly correct in his personal bearing, cool and even haughty towards anyone who was not his close friend, he impressed his contemporaries by his brilliant intelligence, his perfect honesty, his enormous capacity for work. It seems safe to conclude that without him the predominance of Holland's aristocracy would have lasted but a few years. When internal difficulties arose in some of the provinces, De Witt headed missions from Holland to restore peace. When disunity among the commanders hampered the operations of the Navy,

De Witt was there to take command himself as the representative of the States General. In one famous incident the grand pensionary safely took his fleet from the roadstead into the open sea against the advice of experts who had declared the undertaking impossible. He worked unswervingly to secure unity of opinion and purpose among the States. The difficulties of his tasks were increased by the tradition of the States Assemblies, which required unanimity of decision. There was no actual voting at the meetings, but each town deputation put forward its views, and having heard them the pensionary was supposed to draw a "conclusion" with which every deputation could agree. In the solution of these legal puzzles, De Witt was a master. His prestige grew until it overshadowed that of his employers, the States of Holland. This situation created resentment from which arose the first rift in the closed ranks of the aristocracy, and their opponents made excellent use of the openings thus provided.

The cool haughtiness of the grand pensionary towards all people outside the oligarchic caste, was the one trait that prevented his becoming a popular figure. In this respect his personality was typical of the social development of the Dutch burgherclass. De Witt was the ideal *deftige burger*, an untranslatable Dutch expression, the meaning of which may be clear from the foregoing. To be *deftig* became the ambition of the whole Dutch middleclass of the next two hundred and fifty years, and from this general ambition Netherland society suffered until 1940. This deliberate snobbery impaired the magnificent growth of Netherland culture. This was already apparent in De Witt's career. Here was a leading statesman of the Netherlands, ruling at a time when native art flourished as never before or since, and who apparently hardly realized that such an art existed. His biographer notes that the grand pensionary seems to have been on rather friendly terms with Arthur Quellinus, the sculptor who modeled his bust. Portraits of him were made by second-class painters, and the one surviving letter of his to a painter is painfully haughty and condescending. Vondel, the great poet, admired De Witt and glorified him in verses which could hardly have escaped the grand pensionary's notice, yet he never paid any attention to the man who was merely a minor office clerk.

The Netherland States, as well as Netherland society, were taking definite form in the second part of the XVIIth century. In Europe itself the Republic defended its newly acquired place. In the western hemisphere the ephemeral empire was crumbling, that in the eastern was being consolidated. In the Americas, Netherland power had reached its peak shortly before 1640. John Maurice of Nassau, a cousin of Stadhouder Frederick Henry, had accepted the governorship of Brazil, when that Dutch colony extending from the mouth of the Amazon to Bahia (now San Salvador),



seemed to have a great future. John Maurice is the only Dutch empire builder of the seventeenth century who sought to make the style of his administration reflect the greatness of his task. Where the Portuguese had created plantations in a cultural vacuum, he was determined to transplant Netherland arts and sciences. Mauritsstad, the new town that replaced the destroyed Portuguese settlement of Olinda, was his creation. The famous architect Pieter Post accompanied him and built his princely residence, Vrijburg, in Netherland Renaissance style. Scientists such as William Piso and George Marcgraf followed him to his new home and at his behest studied and described the flora and fauna of the country. Such ideals of colonization little suited the wishes of the merchants who ruled the Dutch Atlantic empire from Amsterdam and who sought only profit from an impossible combination of trade and privateering. Part of the Caribbean Islands were controlled by the West India Company; settlements had been formed on the coast of Guyana in the section that now is British; and the colony of New Netherland, extending from the Delaware to the Connecticut Rivers, was giving sizeable returns thanks to the good relations existing between the Dutch and the dreaded Mohawk Indians. After the conquest of the most important Portuguese trading posts on the coast of Guinea and of Angola, the Portuguese Atlantic empire seemed doomed to disappear. The Dutch tricolor ruled the South Atlantic as completely as it did the Indian Ocean. But the whole structure in the New World was inherently weak. By 1670, Dutch authority was reduced to a few Caribbean Islands, to part of the coast of Guyana (including present British and Dutch Guyana), and to scattered trading posts in Africa, where now the British colony of the Gold Coast is found. The whole magnificent Brazilian empire and the promising settlement of New Netherland on the Hudson River had been lost.

Why did the Atlantic empire crumble so rapidly, why did the East Indian empire grow and prosper, although far more money and energy were spent on the former than on the latter? It was not only because the natural resources of the East were more easily exploited than those of the West. The causes of the tragic failure of the West India enterprise were deeper and manifold. First among them was the divided character of the West India Company, to which we have already referred. The needs of a privateering concern differ from those of a business company. Privateering on a large scale called for large sums for the equipment and manning of ships, which in this particular case had to be full-sized men-of-war. To be profitable enormous booty had to be taken year after year, a thing hardly to be expected for the Spaniards and Portuguese were by no means defenseless, and quickly learned to counteract the ways of the Dutch privateers. The direc-

tors in Amsterdam fondly believed they could continue to play the role of buccaneers on a large scale. Their ships and crews had all the adventures and all the hard fighting that was the lot of the buccaneer, but the one brilliant stroke of Piet Hein in the Bay of Matanzas remained an isolated case. Not bad luck, but the Spaniards prevented a repetition of that success.

The West India Company wanted both to plunder the Spaniards and to create an empire. The East India Company first established an empire, carefully selecting for that purpose an area where its enemies were weak, and then turned to the attack. The directors of the West India Company, technically an improved edition of its East Indian model, believed they could build up a commercial system in the Atlantic like that of their colleagues in Asia. The backbone of the Asiatic system was the spice and cloth trade between India and the Malay Archipelago. That of the Atlantic system was to be the slave trade from Angola and the Gold Coast to the Caribbean and Brazil. The West India Company actually gained control of the centers of slave export. It never got a hold on the territory into which the "goods" were to be imported. The gentlemen in Amsterdam figured that if they gained control of all the principal harbors from which "black ebony" was shipped to America, the Spaniards and Portuguese would be forced to buy from them in spite of the king of Spain. They partly succeeded in this scheme, but their monopoly did not last long. In the place of the ousted Portuguese, new competitors appeared in the persons of British interlopers. In half a century they had become the principal slave traders; to the Dutch only a few crumbs were left.

Even so, the West India Company might have paid if the directors had not concentrated their efforts on the wrong point and then abandoned the work when it was half done. The strong naval forces equipped by the Company in 1630 and later might have conquered one or more of the larger islands of the Caribbean from the Spaniards. Instead the directors chose to attack Brazil. Why, we do not know; perhaps, as a Dutch historian has suggested, because they believed that the king of Spain would react less forcefully in defense of a dependency of his Portuguese crown than of one of his hereditary Spanish possessions. Perhaps they derived this idea from the history of the East Indies. It was a fatal mistake, for they attacked Portuguese territory only ten years before Portugal was to revolt against Spain and to become the ally of the Netherlands in Europe. Once started on the enterprise, they did not carry it to its logical conclusion but stopped after the conquest of the northern half of the country, leaving the enemy convenient points for a counter-attack in the southern section.

Having begun the conquest of so large a territory, the company had to devise a colonial policy. Years before the West Indian enterprise was be-

gun, William Usselinx, the spiritual father of the undertaking, had suggested a conquest combined with a vigorous policy of colonization and, as he happened to be a convinced Calvinist, of forcible conversion to the reformed Religion. The directors who, in the words of a prominent Netherlands statesman of the following century, "possessed the pure shopkeeper's mentality and made consistent negligence their principle of action," executed the first part of this program halfway, the third with remarkable persistence, and did nothing about the second. They seemed to believe that in the thinly populated Western Hemisphere the same commercial policy could be followed as in Asia with her populous empires.

Without difficulty they acquired a large and beautiful country in North America, from the present Hartford, Connecticut, to Albany, New York, and down to the boundaries of Maryland. They began by bringing all the settlers scattered at different points along the Hudson together in one community, New Amsterdam on the southern tip of Manhattan Island. That community was to be the base of the fur trade with the Indians. This system did not work; the Mohawks and their allies controlled the fur trade from the north, and only by accepting them as intermediaries could real results be achieved. A new system was inaugurated, that of the "patroonships," grants of land with seigneurial rights to Netherlands capitalists who would colonize their concessions. One of these seigneuries, that of Rensselaer on the middle Hudson, became prosperous; but it owed its prosperity to its location, which permitted it to monopolize contact with the Mohawks. If the Rensselaer family prospered, the Company suffered; for it lost in furs what the Rensselaers gained. A trickle of immigrants moved towards the promised land on the Hudson; more would have come and more would have stayed if the directors had shown better understanding.

The story of New Netherlands's vicissitudes, the reluctance with which the directors yielded to popular pressure on the Hudson and at home, and with which they granted more liberty to the colonists, has been told many times. What was gained in concessions was often undone by the misrule of the governors, who received their post because of family relations. All this continued while land-hungry English immigrants were crowding in from the north. In 1635 they occupied the Dutch "House of Hope" on the Connecticut, which they replaced by the settlement of Hartford; while three years later a company under the Swedish flag but with Dutch resources occupied the banks of the Delaware. The latter intrusion was beaten back by the energetic Peter Stuyvesant who, mustering the largest armed forces until then gathered in the white settlements—seven hundred soldiers on ships—forcibly hauled down the Swedish flag in 1655. New Netherlands did not prosper. It received only a very meager share of the Company's re-

sources. Money and men poured into the Caribbean, where some of the islands seemed bottomless pits swallowing any number of men and amount of material sent to secure their permanent occupation. The small island of Tobago near Trinidad alone received more than seven hundred Dutch immigrants in twenty-five years. Less than seventy survived, and the island was not yet in the Company's possession. New Netherland might have been saved if these immigrants had been encouraged to go to the Hudson instead of to the Caribbean.

The Brazilian Dutch colony suffered from the same misguided policy. The directors expected the new colony to produce sugar and dye-stuffs without people to produce them. Since the XVIth century, the district of Pernambuco had been one of the richest sugar producing areas of the world. The directors built great hopes on the capture of the Portuguese plantations many of which would be evacuated by their original owners; but they had not figured that the Portuguese would apply a "scorched earth" policy and burn down the sugar mills, plantation buildings, and even the crops on the fields. John Maurice succeeded in getting the sugar production started again by selling plantations on easy terms, by importing negro slaves (some 23,000 of these unfortunates were brought over from Africa in nine years), and by policing the countryside against the raids of Portuguese guerillas.

In this reorganization of Brazil's economic life the Jews played an important role. The baptized Brazilian Jews, oppressed by the Inquisition, had looked forward to Dutch occupation. Apparently they had shown their sympathy with Portugal's enemies too openly, for shortly before the fall of Pernambuco the Inquisition charged some of them with high treason and defection from the Church they had accepted by baptism. Once the Netherlanders were established in Brazil, the colony became a haven of refuge for Jews from many European countries and from Portuguese territory. Hundreds of their co-religionists who had found homes in Amsterdam came over to Pernambuco to live in a Portuguese-speaking world, beyond the reach of the Inquisition. Two-thirds of the plantations sold by the Company were bought by Jews, while other members of the same community devoted themselves to trading. The influence of these Jewish colonists became such that in Brazil—for the first time under the Netherland flag—anti-Semitism developed, doubtlessly fostered by lingering Portuguese ideas.

All the energy of John Maurice of Nassau, all the bravery of his soldiers, all the feverish activity of the immigrants, Jews and non-Jews, could not save the colony. The sugar industry was only partly restored. Brazil formerly exported more than twenty million pounds a year, mostly produced in

the North, and this had fallen to not more than seven or eight million pounds. Employers and capital were lacking and labor was scarce. The slave trade could have supplied the labor if guerilla warfare and political unrest had not discouraged capitalists and immigrants. The amount of private capital invested in Brazil can not be computed. The sale of plantations alone brought the company more than two million guilders. In the nine years between 1636 and 1645 the sale of slaves brought nearly seven million guilders. All these were not paid for in cash, certainly not the plantations. It seems safe to conclude, however, that the planters of Brazil and their financial backers at home sank more than ten millions in this South American enterprise, which ended in tragic failure.

Traditional historiography has it that the prosperity of the homeland caused the failure of the Dutch settlements in the Western Hemisphere. The ordinary reasons for emigration, economic distress and religious persecution, were lacking. This seems to provide a perfect and even satisfying explanation of the tragedy of Brazil and the languishing existence of New Netherland. But this theory is not wholly correct. Religious reasons were indeed lacking. In only one case did a small group of dissenters leave the Netherlands because of persecution. This was the exodus of a few thousand Arminians after the Synod of Dordrecht had excommunicated them from the Dutch Reformed Church. Economic reasons for emigration, however, undoubtedly did exist. All contemporary writers complain of the "overpopulation" of the Netherlands. "Our country is overcrowded with people, and there are ten hands for every job," wrote a pamphleteer of 1622, and later writers proposed to make the West Indies a "Home for the Poor" and to refuse charity to all able-bodied unemployed who did not emigrate. There were poor people enough in the Netherlands, but not in the right professions. The weak and undernourished workers of the cities with their starving children, could not provide the right kind of immigrants. Farmers were needed. Zeeland had a surplus of farmers and farm hands, and from there thousands emigrated, but to the Caribbean Islands where sub-tropical diseases, the hostility of the Spaniards, murderous attacks by the Carib Indians exterminated most of them. The truth seems to be that there was a shortage of the right type of emigrant-pioneer, and that such people as presented themselves too often sacrificed their lives in efforts doomed to fail.

In spite of all this, the American settlements might have flourished if the best type of emigrants had not been attracted elsewhere. The single group who left the country to escape religious persecution, moved to Holstein, where they founded Friederichstadt. The princes of northern Germany whose territories had suffered horribly in the Thirty Years' War, sought

colonists expert at draining marshes and specialists in dairy production, and found them in emigrants from Groningen, Friesland and Zeeland. Why should these people go to the wild lands on the Hudson where Indian warfare was a constant threat, or to Brazil where they would be exposed to the revenge of the Portuguese, when they could obtain land in Brandenburg, Holstein, the Rhineland, Denmark, Sweden, France (near La Rochelle), or even in England, where they drained the Norfolk fens? Here security and prosperity were assured. Many thousands of such colonists spread over Europe. Compare this situation with that in England, where thousands of the common people were *forced* to emigrate and where religious persecution provided them with strong leadership and the success of English and the failure of Dutch colonization is easily understood.

In the history of Dutch XVIIth century emigration one episode stands apart. In 1662 Pieter Cornelis Plockhoy, who for years had dreamed of sweeping social reforms, received permission from the burgomasters of Amsterdam to recruit a number of men, willing to follow him to New Netherland to found a model colony on the basis of complete equality and democracy. Plockhoy had previously expounded his ideas on the ideal social community in several treatises. No ecclesiastics were to be permitted to exercise authority, private economic interests were to be completely subordinated to those of the community, no man was to be another's servant and all authority was to rest with the citizens in meeting assembled. Plockhoy's plan for his settlement in New Netherland was not quite so radical, yet radical enough to make its ready acceptance by the City of Amsterdam difficult to understand. The burgomasters, officially loyal members of the Reformed Church, permitted the founding of a settlement from which clergymen of all denominations would be rigorously excluded and where no dogmatic Christian creed was recognized! The program for the settlement, circulated by Plockhoy in the Netherlands, may indeed be called one of "the most extraordinary of the early memorials of American colonization" as a New York historian has described it. Plockhoy's colony did not last long. In 1664 English soldiers plundered it and dispersed its inhabitants. Plockhoy died, many years later, in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

The concentration of the West India Company on trade rather than on agriculture, despite its disadvantages was not without beneficial consequences. It created a workable basis for cooperation with the native populations. A superficial survey of Netherland colonial activities in the West leaves the impression that the Netherlanders were more humane than most other European nations in their dealings with the Indians. Some historians have dwelt upon this theory and exaggerated the nobility of the Dutch attitude. The Netherlanders approached the Indians from a different

point of view than either the English or the Spaniards. Unlike so many English immigrants, they were not poor land-hungry farmers, whose interests of necessity clashed with those of semi-nomadic natives. Nor did they seek to exploit the riches of the earth by compulsory labor. Coming long after the Spaniards, they resorted to negro slave labor when they wanted such exploitation. They needed the Indians as purveyors of natural products or—as in Brazil—as allies against a common enemy.

In their relations with the native populations, the Dutch followed a consistent policy. There was usually one tribe or group of tribes with whom they cultivated friendship. In the Hudson valley the Mohawks were their allies, on the coast of Guyana some of the Carib tribes, in Brazil the Tapuya Indians, who lived in the mountains northwest of Pernambuco. Two of these Indian nations found their historians in contemporary Dutch writers. Johannes Megapolensis, minister of the church at Rensselaerswijk near Albany, left a description of the Mohawks, whom he vainly sought to convert to Christianity. He sadly acknowledged his impotence when he saw the wild warriors standing in the rear of his church, smoking and laughing at him while he was thundering away at his rough Dutch parishioners. Elias Herckmans, member of the Council of Brazil, gave a far less sympathetic description of the Tapuya Indians, but his observations were long considered authoritative by ethnological experts.

The directors of the West India Company showed less foresight in dealing with their own compatriots than in handling the native problem. The aristocrats who at home followed the theory that the burgher being a small fellow must be kept small, were disinclined to treat the motley group of settlers in their colonies with more respect. They refused to consider the possible effect of self-governing English settlements adjacent to their own possessions. This led to a continuous struggle for greater autonomy by the people of New Netherland. Here at least a limited amount of self-government was wrested from the reluctant gentlemen of Amsterdam. In Brazil the situation was complicated by the presence of Catholic Portuguese colonists. John Maurice of Nassau did his utmost to secure for the inhabitants a modest share in public affairs, regardless of their religious convictions. The stubbornness and narrowmindedness of the directors, combined with the religious fanaticism of some of the ministers of the Church, thwarted all his efforts and led to the catastrophe of 1654, when the capital of the colony capitulated to a victorious army of insurgents, who after eight years of bitter fighting had driven the Dutch troops from the soil of Brazil.

In 1640 the people of Portugal revolted against Spain. The national revolution spread over all colonial territories and in Brazil naturally directed

itself against the Netherlanders. The States General, glad of the Portuguese resistance to Spain, could not very well attack these same Portuguese for their support of the rebels in Brazil. Once peace with Spain was concluded, the Republic declared war on Portugal, but only the East India Company benefited through the conquest of Portuguese strongholds in Ceylon and India. Brazil was irretrievably lost. In 1661 peace was restored. The West India Company ceded all claims in Brazil in exchange for a lump sum of eight million guilders.

The great Atlantic enterprise had failed. Not only Brazil but also Angola on the African coast had been reconquered by Portugal. In 1664 King Charles II of Great Britain decided to make good his claims to the eastern seaboard of North America. A British squadron appeared off New Amsterdam and forced the surrender of the colony. Subsequent Dutch-British wars brought a short-lived restoration of Dutch sovereignty on the Hudson in 1673, but the eventual outcome was the restriction of Dutch territory in the New World to the island groups of Curaçao and St. Eustachius, and to the coastlands of Guyana where in 1664 an enterprising Zeeland commander had added the territory of Surinam to that of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, now forming British Guyana. These small countries and islands, and some slave trading posts on the African Gold Coast, were the meager result of fifty years of warfare and colonization in the Atlantic area. No wonder that the West India Company went into bankruptcy in 1674, with a debt of six million guilders, and no prospects to speak of. A new West India Company with a modest capital of 630,000 guilders took over the Company's assets and one-third of its debts. Except for the slave trade, the West Indies were thrown open to private commerce.

The Dutch settlements in the Americas left few traces. Only the Netherlanders on the Hudson vigorously maintained their traditions, of which the Dutch Reformed Church was the main support. Of the colony in Brazil nothing but memories remained, but the national revival provoked by the Dutch invaders of that country contributed greatly to Brazilian national consciousness and the territory of Pernambuco became the cradle of Brazilian nationalism. Thus, unwittingly and unwillingly, the Netherlanders may have contributed to the independence of the largest South American republic. The Jewish communities fled from Pernambuco when it was restored to Portuguese sovereignty. Some of their members returned to Europe; some sought a new home under the Dutch flag in the West Indies where many of their descendants may still be found in Curaçao and Surinam.

The development of the Asiatic Dutch empire was the exact reverse of that in the West. Here expansion and stabilization were continuous. The



conflict with Portugal, so disastrous to the West India Company, provided its sister institution in the East with a golden opportunity to finish the job interrupted by the Treaty of Muenster. In 1648 the status quo had been accepted as a basis for the demarcation of Dutch and Spanish-Portuguese colonial spheres of influence. This had left the coast of Ceylon divided between the Dutch and the Portuguese, a situation which benefited only the king of Kandi, who ruled the interior and thanks to this divided control was able to play one European power against the other. The southern tip of India was also under divided control. The second war with Portugal resulted in the establishment of the supremacy of the Dutch East India Company in this whole area. Ceylon became the company's "cinnamon garden," and the king of Kandi its vassal and royal purveyor of elephants. The only use the gentlemen of Amsterdam had for these interesting animals, was as presents to other Asiatic princes.

Control over the ports of southern India gave the Company a monopoly over Asiatic textiles, and cloth from Malabar was one of the principal objects of trade in the Malay Archipelago. Once in possession of all these trading posts (which nowhere included authority over the interior), the Dutch Company definitely superseded the Portuguese empire in Asia. Only the bravery of their inhabitants saved Goa and Macao, which are Portuguese today, from the same fate as Colombo and Malacca. Some Portuguese commerce was still carried on with the connivance of native princes, who now resented Dutch control of the seas as much as they had formerly detested Portuguese supremacy. The sultans of Macassar in southern Celebes were among the principal supporters of non-Dutch trade. In their capital, Portuguese, Danish, and British traders had factories, and the hardy Buginese and Macassar sailors kept up a brisk smuggling trade in cloves and nutmeg in the strictly monopolized area of the Moluccas. In 1661, tension between the government of Batavia and the king of Macassar resulted in war. In two strenuous campaigns the Company's troops, commanded by Cornelis Speelman and aided by Aru Palacca, prince of the Buginese, forced Macassar to submit. Foreign traders were driven from the town, which lost all significance once monopoly had stifled its trade. Some Portuguese merchants continued to intrude from the island of Timor, where missionaries of their nation had established native Christian communities. The Company paid no further attention to this remnant of its rival's empire and eastern Timor has remained Portuguese despite successive Dutch-Australian and Japanese occupation.

Against these gains, and the exclusive right to trade with the people of Japan—through a single factory on the small island of Deshima opposite Nagasaki—stood the loss of Formosa, one of the Company's most promis-

ing settlements. The Company's dealings with this island just off the Chinese coast present unusual features, which distinguishes its history from that of other Dutch settlements in the East. When the Dutch went to Formosa in 1624, the island was still definitely outside the Chinese cultural and political area. Its inhabitants, racially related to the Philippine tribes, were more open to western influence than those of the south Asiatic regions, where Hinduism and Mohammedanism opposed European cultural influence and the Company could not promote Christianity without impairing its good relations with the natives and consequently its commercial interests. Formosa provided an opportunity for the "Spanish" method of colonization: converting the native people to the religion and the language of the rulers. The results were most encouraging. Within fifteen years a Christian community of five to six thousand people had been formed. Wherever congregations were organized schools were opened, because knowledge of Dutch was necessary for the new Christians, who were supposed to read the Staten Bible. Several hundred children attended school, and the hope seemed well founded that the whole population of Formosa would be won over to Christianity and Netherland civilization. The Netherlands did not have the opportunity, however, to indoctrinate the people of Formosa for an equal period of time as the Spaniards had to educate the Filipinos. Thousands of Chinese patriots, forced to seek refuge on the sea from the Manchu invasion of their homeland, lurked around Formosa in the hopes of establishing a foothold on the island. In 1661, the Chinese leader Koxinga landed with a strong force and undertook the successful siege of the principal Dutch stronghold. The negligence of the Government at Batavia contributed as much to the loss of the Dutch fortress as the skill and courage of the Chinese partisans. The Netherland settlers were murdered, the natives ruthlessly punished, and the island occupied by Chinese immigrants. Even so, traces of Dutch cultural activity among the natives lingered on into the XIXth century.

The loss of Formosa, deprived the Company of its base for the China trade and was a major setback. It was the only setback, however, that the Batavian merchant-princes suffered in those years of their greatest prosperity and expansion under the able and cautious leadership of Governor-General Johan Maetsuijcker (1653-1678). For twenty-five years, without once taking a vacation, this shrewd and stubborn administrator ruled the Dutch Asiatic empire from Batavia's sultry castle. He knew how to pick his men from among the crowd of naval officers, employees, and native allies with whom he had to work. His legalistic mind was well adapted to the task of keeping everyone, from the boisterous and extravagant admiral Speelman, the conqueror of Macassar, to the ministers of the Church in

Batavia, in his proper place. His firm policy of never allowing any person or interest to disturb the rigid principles of administration laid down by the Company, truly represented in the Far East the political traditions of the Dutch ruling class. Not being himself a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, he vigorously opposed religious intolerance. Strictly interpreted, the ordinances of the Company, permitted only congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church to worship publicly in the Company's territory. These were not enforced, for the Chinese and Mohammedans continued to practice their own forms of worship. In calling for the suppression of these practices, the Batavian consistory made the mistake of basing its argument on the Law of Moses instead of on an ordinance of the directors, which gave Maetsuijcker an opportunity to rebuke them: "The laws of the ancient Jewish republics have no force in the territory of the East India Company!"

Maetsuijcker was the author of the first code of laws of the Netherlands Indies. Known as the Statutes of Batavia, this code was promulgated in 1642. It is important as the basis of Dutch judicial organization in the East. Dutch law was to be followed in all cases not provided for in the code. Where Dutch law was insufficient, Roman law was to be followed. One important exception was made to this general rule: if a case touching upon a point of Chinese customary law was brought before the court, the court might assign a Chinese judge to sit on the bench and to decide the case according to Chinese law. This was the beginning of the plural judicial system still prevailing in the Netherland Indies.

The directors of the East India Company, whose record as exploiters of native peoples is sufficiently bad, are usually charged with the additional crime of gross cultural negligence. In this respect their reputation is worse than their deeds. It is obvious that they did not promote scientific research or spread knowledge as part of their government in the East. Like modern business concerns, the company showed great interest in discoveries that contributed directly to the financial success of their enterprise. The directors were willing to pay for better methods of combating the diseases that were frequent aboard ship on long voyages; but when asked to submit their ideas on the subject, the professors of medicine found endless subterfuges to avoid answering that they had none. The Company did nothing to discourage the publication of books on the East Indies, their peoples and their natural characteristics, unless they thought some trade "secret" was involved. Abraham Rogerius's description of Hinduism and Rumphius's work on botany are monuments of Indology. Herbert De Jager, one of the greatest linguists of his age, was in the service of the Company when he studied the affinity of the Malay-Polynesian language group. The directors

paid for translations of the Bible into Malay and for the education of missionaries, but the results of their endeavors were modest. Like most modern business men the directors did not go out of their way to promote learning or culture, but encouraged it when their help was asked. Business interests predominated. The spread of Christianity usually meant the converting of those already baptized by Portuguese Jesuits from Catholicism to Calvinism. Interference with the internal administration of native princes, allies of the Company, was not tolerated. Wherever Islam ruled (and that was nearly everywhere in the Company's sphere of direct influence), the conversion of the natives and the spread of western knowledge was not to be looked for. Even the field of education was not completely neglected by the Batavian government, too often described as showing no interest in this field, for it opened schools for slave children in its capital.

Shortly before Maetsuijcker took the reins of government in Batavia, a most important decision was reached by the directors in Amsterdam. To lessen the dangers and discomforts of the long sea voyage to the east, a half-way station was founded on the southern tip of Africa. In 1647, the ship "Haarlem" had been wrecked in *Tafelbaai*. The crew succeeded in getting ashore and stayed there five months, during which time they grew vegetables and traded with the natives. The climate, the fertility of the soil, the friendliness of the natives, all seemed to invite a settlement; and in 1651 the directors sent Commander Jan van Riebeeck to South Africa, where on April 6, 1652, he went ashore and built his camp on the present site of Capetown. His instructions were to maintain good relations with the native Hottentot tribes, and he was explicitly forbidden to take part in their mutual wars. His arguments that the Dutch settlers by joining with one tribe against another could easily procure herds of cattle for the colony, failed to change this decision.

The problem at the Cape, as in Brazil and New Netherland, was how to recruit settlers. Riebeeck offered a simple solution which if carried through would have changed African history. The "cheapest" and best colonizers, he said, were the Chinese. He had been in the Indies and knew how Jan Pieterszoon Coen had esteemed the Chinese for their industry and simple way of life. Batavia could never have flourished as it did but for Chinese artisans and trades. The Batavian Government rejected Riebeeck's idea, and sent out a small number of slaves. Others were brought in from the coast of Guinea, but not in considerable numbers. In 1657 Capetown numbered 134 Europeans and 11 slaves. The new settlement served real needs. In the first seven years of its founding, an average of twenty-five ships a year carrying five thousand men, anchored in the bay. For the crews, the change of diet, from salt fish and biscuit to fresh vegetables and meat, was

a relief that saved thousands of lives. The captains, who liked to increase their income by cutting down on the crews' rations, naturally complained of Capetown, where they said, the meat was lean and the roadstead dangerous.

In those years four great modern cities came into existence under the Dutch flag: New York, Pernambuco, Capetown, and Batavia. New York, small as it was in 1660, was already a city of many languages and peoples. Pernambuco had a population drawn from all nations and was notorious for its "night-life," to put it mildly. Capetown was a small hamlet, a street with a church and a fortress, with a tribe of miserable, degenerate Hottentots living beneath its primitive walls. Batavia was the most "magnificent" of the four, with its streets along the canals, just as in Holland, with its Chinese shopkeepers and artisans, its Dutch *burghers* with their numerous slaves, and its *Mardykers*, freedmen, descendants of former Portuguese slaves born in India. They were Christians and aped the Europeans, walking the streets, as a contemporary author says, "dressed up like a quack's monkey at a country fair." They were so many that Portuguese, with a mixture of Dutch and Malay, was the common language of XVIIth century Batavia, much to the disgust of the directors in Amsterdam, who vainly urged the use of correct Dutch. This was the Netherland empire of the middle of the seventeenth century. It was curious that a small nation should wield greater power in the distant oceans than in the sea washing its home shores.

The European position of the Netherlands underwent considerable change in the second half of the XVIIth century. Netherland trade no longer expanded as it had done in the first four decades of the century. As larger ships were used, the bulk of the merchandise carried increased, but not enough to keep Netherland trade at the same high level in relation to international commerce as a whole. Substantial profits were made in the Baltic, the Spanish and Mediterranean trade; but in France and England the predominance of the Netherlanders was waning rapidly. More and more capital amassed in the hands of Dutch merchants. The desire to seek new economic outlets, to exploit every possible opportunity, decreased with the progress of well-being. This accumulation of wealth seemed to ensure to the merchant princes of Amsterdam a firm and permanent hold over a great part of international trade. They did not want to spend all their time and energy acquiring more.

Satisfied with their gains and those of their ancestors, the Dutch merchants were no longer so keen to eliminate competition, especially as they understood the grave risks entailed. The general situation of Europe had changed considerably since 1648. Spain was reduced to a second-class power.

For ten years after the Treaty of Muenster her armies, though continuously defeated, remained in the field against France. France was taking Spain's place as the great military power of the continent. Danger to the land boundaries of the Netherlands could come from that quarter only, and no longer from Spain or any part of Germany. Spain had ceased to be a naval power after the crushing defeat at the Downs in 1639. On the seas the Netherlands found a new competitor in Great Britain, reunited under new rulers, sturdy middleclass men and country squires who at the outset closely resembled the Dutch Regent class. Denmark, in control of the Sund, looked to the Netherlands for protection against the ambitions of Sweden, well on her way to making the Baltic a Swedish lake. The Republic of the Netherlands, obviously satisfied with what it had, seemed a natural defender of weaker powers willing to accept its economic leadership. Such a policy would mean siding with Spain against France, to maintain the southern Lowlands as a buffer state between the Dutch frontier and expansionist France. It would mean supporting Denmark, Brandenburg and Poland against Sweden. Finally it would entail bold and vigorous opposition to England everywhere—in America, in Africa and nearer home in the Channel and the North Sea.

A policy of deliberate opposition to England, France and Sweden seemed sheer madness and national suicide. No serious Dutch statesman could advocate it. John De Witt, cautious and peace-loving, certainly would not involve his country in such risks. Yet, events in 1672 were to prove that the material resources of the Republic were so great that it was actually able not only to withstand the combined attack of these military powers, but to defeat them with the help of weaker states. Even had he favored it personally and been able to win over the States to it, John De Witt realized that an active foreign policy, was bound to bring about internal revolution. Such wars could not be fought without a commander-in-chief, and none other than the prince of Orange was acceptable to the army or the people. For political reasons as for reasons of principle, the burgher-aristocracy was opposed to all forms of militarism, to "wasting" money on soldiers and equipment, even on ships of war. The world being what it unfortunately is, De Witt with his cool judgment knew that certain military forces are needed in peacetime to prepare for inevitable wars. The majority of the States Assemblies lacked all knowledge of military matters; they had faith in the old-fashioned system of equipping merchantmen for naval warfare, which had brought the glorious victory of the Downs and had won the empire; they believed that a navy could be created overnight. They willfully ignored the fact that at the time of the battle of the Downs, the

Netherlands had had an army under eminent leadership and with a great tradition.

The opportunity which had offered itself around 1650, when France could still be stopped in her conquest of the southern Netherlands and Britain could still be defeated, was allowed to pass. Three years after the burgher-aristocrats had gained full control, they were attacked by Great Britain. The royal claim to sovereignty over the "English" Seas was taken up by Parliament. It was preceded by an act of economic war against the Netherlands, the Navigation Act of 1651, which gave a monopoly of British imports to British shipping. Great Britain was on her way to more complete economic nationalism, and other nations were soon to follow. The Act was intended as a serious blow to the Dutch system of trading, but for a time it was less strongly enforced in practice than formulated in law. In itself it could not furnish the essential requirement of commerce: capital. The practical application of these British pretensions to maritime sovereignty caused the outbreak of warfare, in which the Dutch republic despite its greater financial and naval resources, suffered a serious defeat.<sup>40</sup> If it had not been for the genius and courage of the Dutch commanders—Tromp who fell in the battle of Terheide, Witte de With, De Ruyter and others who worked wonders with undisciplined fleets, small and badly armed ships, and a constant shortage of ammunition—the defeat would have been decisive. Not only the North Sea and the Channel, but all European waters were theaters of war. In the northern and southern theaters the Dutch easily remained masters. Their economic influence and the fear of Sweden brought Denmark to their side and permitted the closing of the Sund. In the Mediterranean their squadrons defeated the British and secured control east of the Straits of Gibraltar. But in the main theater of war, the situation was different. Tromp was confronted with a gigantic task. British merchantmen, few in number, could put safely into ports on the western coast of England, only occasionally threatened by Dutch privateers; while the large and valuable Dutch convoys from the south and the west could only reach port through waters controlled by the enemy. Tromp needed his whole fleet to protect those convoys. To carry on offensive operations at the same time was out of the question.

This disastrous war might have served as a lesson to the ruling caste in Holland, had it not been that the ensuing peace treaty suited their particular political interests too well. In England the power of Parliament was broken by Cromwell who, a shrewd diplomat and Calvinist idealist at the same time, saw a similarity between his own interests and those of the ruling oligarchy in Holland. Fearing that the Netherlands, if aroused to

energetic action abroad by an ambitious prince of Orange, closely related to the Stuarts, might become the base of a royalist counter-revolution, he decided to sacrifice momentary naval supremacy to security against such an eventuality. In the peace of Westminster of 1654, two regimes, both threatened at home by interrelated oppositions, found each other. By his concessions Cromwell saved Holland's oligarchy from certain defeat at the hands of the Orangists. It was a humiliating success for that oligarchy. The treaty permitted Netherland merchants to continue their temporarily interrupted trade, but that was all. The international position of the Republic had suffered greatly. The king of France, young Louis XIV, was crushing Spanish power in the southern Low Countries. As his share in the booty, Cromwell demanded and obtained with other territories the town of Dunkirk. The Narrows of Dover were now as completely English as the Sund was Danish. Netherland commerce was hemmed in between two gates which could be closed at any time. The policy of active neutrality seemed to have failed. The Republic had become merely a passive onlooker while England and France decided the fate of western Europe.

This political situation did not reflect the existing potentialities of power, as John De Witt well knew. In spite of the heavy cost of war, the credit of the States of Holland was rising. The rate of interest on the public debt was reduced to four percent, an unusually low rate. The States General could raise millions without difficulty and remain financially independent, the bondholders being citizens of the Republic, whereas foreign governments had difficulty in finding a few hundred thousand and even for that had to appeal to Dutch bankers. The leaders of so sound and powerful a state did not need to bow to foreign rulers at a time when armies were for hire, and in a country with more ships and sailors than any other.

In spite of all this, the Republic did not dare to offend either Cromwell or King Louis by openly opposing their ambitious schemes. The situation became critical when Sweden, the third of the new militaristic powers, began an all-out drive for control of the Baltic Sea and the Sund. War flared up again in East Prussia with the Hohenzollerns, in Poland, in Denmark. If the Sund became Swedish, if Poland and Prussia were no longer accessible to Dutch wheat-traders, then the Republic, cut off from the source of its financial strength, was bound to succumb. Necessity forced the Republic to side with the weaker powers. Dutch squadrons protected Danzig and kept the Sund open. Help was promised to Denmark, and the Swedish troops were driven from its soil. Fate assisted the prudent but energetic policy of De Witt. Cromwell's death freed Holland's oligarchy from an overzealous sympathizer. Contrary to all expectation the peace



treaty concluded between Spain and France in 1659, left the southern Low Countries as a protective cushion for the Republic's southern frontier.

Cardinal de Mazarin, prime minister of France, had been moderate in his demands, not from conviction but because he hoped to complete the French conquest of the Spanish monarchy through the tender approach of matrimonial alliance, rather than by the crude methods of war. The peace treaty of 1659 merely gave the Netherlands a brief respite. It in no way solved the Belgian problem. Both in the east and in the south, the Netherland frontiers needed greater security. Disdainful of continental affairs the oligarchy of Holland failed to recognize this. Drawing their living from the sea, connected with foreign countries by the sea, they thought of Holland as an island, and of the land provinces as so many bridgeheads on the continent. The grand pensionary knew better, but his hands were tied by the egotism of his caste. He was forced to permit foreign powers to make the areas adjacent to the Republic bases from which to launch possible aggression.

The eastern frontier was the most neglected, yet nowhere had the Republic a better chance to secure itself. After the Thirty Years' War, northern Germany was in a deplorable condition, spiritually and materially. Dutch cultural influence was strong throughout the old Low-German lands. The Dutch language was widely understood. Netherland actors brought Dutch plays, or Spanish plays in Dutch translation, to the stages of Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin, Koenigsberg, and even of Danzig and Riga. Dutch literature was admired and imitated. The Dutch language was the official medium of religious instruction in East Friesland. In that small district the struggle between Dutch and High German lasted for two centuries, from the middle of the XVIIth to the middle of the XIXth century. While the Reformed Church in East Friesland adopted Dutch versions of the Psalms and catechism and all its sermons were preached in Dutch, the Lutherans made High German their church language. Religion and the language of worship became strangely interrelated. To preach in a Calvinist Church in High German or in Dutch in a Lutheran one, verged on "heresy." This relation both strengthened and weakened the Dutch linguistic hold on East Friesland. Its strength was that Dutch became part of a religious tradition among a naturally conservative people. Its weakness was that Dutch was always considered the language of a particular, closed group. By the end of the XVIIth century the civil authorities of Emden, supported by the example of the court of the East Frisian counts, where High German was spoken, began to propagate that language deliberately. Resentment against the subordination of the county's interest to those of

the Republic naturally emphasized East Friesland's political and cultural connections with the Empire. The Dutch language was bound to regress even further when in 1744, Prussian authority replaced that of the native princes. In the small principality of Bentheim, east of Overijssel, Dutch was the literary language throughout this period. The States General were even the official protectors of the Calvinist Congregation in the little state. Lingen, somewhat further to the east, belonged to the princes of Orange. The duchy of Cleve had been intimately connected with the Netherlands since the Middle Ages. John Maurice of Nassau, the governor of Brazil, had administered this and other provinces for the prince-elect of Brandenburg and embellished his residence with the assistance of Dutch architects. Dutch was spoken and used as a literary language here until far into the XIXth century. All along the eastern boundary of the Republic Netherlands influence was strong.

That fact gained particular significance from the general attitude of the German people towards the United Provinces in the latter part of the XVIIth century. There was much envy, of course, of the extraordinary prosperity of the Netherlands, which contrasted sharply with the poverty of war-torn Germany. The power of Dutch capitalism which fattened on loans to German princes, created bitter feelings expressed in the saying, "Where a Dutchman treads, no grass can grow." "The ancients," wrote a pamphleteer, "said that the crocodile was the only animal equally dangerous on land and in the water. If they had lived in our age, they would have known that the crocodile has its counterpart among the nations."<sup>41</sup> But to many Germans the Dutch republic meant something more than profit-making capitalism. All over western Germany, local princes were struggling with their subjects in a determined attempt to establish absolute sovereignty and to suppress the traditional liberties of the local States Assemblies. In Emden, Muenster, and Duesseldorf, when their freedom was threatened by their respective princes, the representatives of the towns called for "Dutch medicine to cure aching liberty." Even the town of Brunswick looked west for assistance. The philosopher Leibniz was among those who admired the Republic for the moderation of its government. Idealists, scholars, merchants, townspeople usually sympathized with the Netherlands. The princes constantly complained to the Imperial court against Dutch interference.

Holland's burgher-aristocracy did not know how to make use of the brilliant opportunity offered here. They did not *want* to be bothered with West German problems. The town of Muenster, harassed by Bernhard von Galen, its tyrannical prince-bishop, nicknamed "Bombing Barend," sought help from the States General. Amsterdam vigorously opposed intervention.

These inland problems were of no interest to sea-faring Holland, its burgo-masters contended. The grand pensionary knew better and secured permission at least to mediate between the town and bishop. A few years later Amsterdam was to find by bitter experience how closely those "inland problems" affected its own interests.

The problem of the southern frontier was only little better understood than that of the eastern. The Republic wanted the southern provinces to stand as a buffer between its territory and France, but the merchants of Holland stubbornly refused to relax their stringent control over the economic life of those provinces. In view of the rough disdain with which the representatives of the States General treated the Government of Brussels, it would not have been surprising if the people of Flanders and Brabant had longed for incorporation in France, which would have freed them from the Republic's oppressive economic hegemony. It was only the broad local autonomy they enjoyed in the last decades of Spanish rule, and which they would have had to sacrifice under the absolute monarchy of King Louis of France, that kept them from seeking such incorporation. John De Witt tried to ward off the danger from the south by seeking the friendship of Louis XIV and proposing a joint settlement of Belgian affairs, but he himself must have seen that such expedients could not solve the problem.

De Witt sought the friendship both of France and Great Britain. It was the only way in which he could pursue the policy of "most passive possible neutrality," which had become a dogma of the aristocracy. He knew that it could not save his country from grave dangers. England, determined to gain naval and commercial supremacy and encouraged by her success in the first Anglo-Dutch war, waited only for an opportunity to strike a second, more deadly blow. King Charles II, with some of Cromwell's shrewdness but none of his idealism, ascended the throne of his father after the pitiful collapse of English republicanism. From him the Netherlanders had nothing to expect. The Orangist party, building its hopes on the relations between the Stuart and Orange families, deceived only themselves when they looked to Charles for an alliance, that would have been the counterpart of the former combination between Cromwell and De Witt. By asking the help of the British king in their struggle against the burgher-aristocracy, they merely gave Charles the means of dividing and weakening the Republic before attacking it. De Witt may have hoped that France at least would remain loyal to her promises, but King Louis was waiting only for another chance to expand his northern frontier to include Belgium, and a conflict between the Netherlands and England would provide that opportunity.

With an administration like that of the Republic, the Netherland State

seemed doomed to be crushed between its powerful and dangerous neighbors. The strangling of Netherland trade by closing the Baltic and the Channel seemed easy. The southern and eastern frontiers were open. The frontier strongholds that had withstood Spanish attacks fifty years before were neglected, and useless against new, improved methods of attack. Yet in the fifty years following the humiliating treaty of Westminster, the Republic defeated its opponent in four major wars, strengthened its boundaries, and asserted its place among the nations of Europe. Only De Witt's devotion and energy made this possible. He laid the foundation for the work of Prince William III of Orange who in the last quarter of the century became the leader of the great alliance which then saved Europe from conquest by monarchical totalitarianism.

De Witt organized the finances of the Republic, re-established its credit, reduced the rate of interest on its debt, and created a reserve which in the hour of need made possible the rapid building and equipping of a strong navy. De Witt urged the reorganization of the army, but among the leading aristocrats anti-Orangist sentiment prevailed over national interest. De Witt with his supporters organized a Dutch diplomatic service, the like of which has never been seen in the Netherlands. Finally, everywhere and always the grand pensionary set a personal example; when all seemed lost, he impressed his colleagues with his cool and calm determination to carry on no matter how small the chance of success.

What Prince Maurice had done for the army at the end of the XVIth century, De Witt tried to do for the navy sixty years later. In the first Anglo-Dutch war, the Netherlands had very few ships built and equipped for war, and these few were far less powerful than the English. Ships of forty or at most sixty guns had to fight enemy vessels of sixty to ninety guns. The guns of the British navy were standardized, those of the Dutch fleet came from numerous arsenals—from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Zeeland, the storehouses of the East and West India Companies—and were all of different calibre. The Dutch navy, fighting for the richest state of northern Europe, lacked ammunition because the four admiralties lacked credit and did not receive sufficient funds from the state authorities. Sometimes the members of the admiralties, aristocrats like all other office-holders, resented interference by the States, because they feared to lose their private and illicit profits. The Dutch navy could not find sailors, while the port of Amsterdam was teeming with unemployed seamen. Contemporary historians assert that sailors went into hiding or fled to Emden or Hamburg when recruiting for the navy began. "They did not like this business of shooting off arms and legs," we are told.

They had reason to dislike it. When in 1653, Witte de With inspected

his squadron of fifty ships, he found only one medicine chest aboard for all! There were no rewards for the wounded or pensions for the widows of those killed in action. Even the widow of Piet Hein, who had captured Spain's silver fleet, did not receive a cent above six months' salary after her husband's heroic death. As for crippled sailors, they were put ashore to go begging on the streets. If only they had been paid for their services, the situation might have been different; but the wages on men-of-war were lower than on merchantmen, at most eleven guilders a month, and the food was poor. Wages were not paid regularly and when, in the first Anglo-Dutch war, the crews of a squadron mutinied, the States of Holland, instead of sending the sailors' pay, demanded of the admiralty "that the impudence of the crews be properly punished." After rendering eminent services, Admiral Maarten Tromp, received a bonus of two thousand guilders, a mere gratuity compared to the enormous grants formerly made to the princes of Orange for the conquest of a single town. The crews received no bonuses, hardly an extra glass of brandy. Once Tromp was so short handed that he attacked an English fishing fleet to press enemy sailors into his ships. A large percentage of the crews was always made up of "Eastlanders" and "Northlanders," North Germans and Scandinavians. The officers were always Dutch, but that did not mean that they always obeyed orders. Tromp, escorting a huge convoy from France to the home ports, saw many of his captains flee with the merchantmen when the English approached for the attack. They had so stuffed their men-of-war with French merchandise that at the firing of the first broadside their ships would have capsized. Then the old sea-dog, with a few dozen loyal assistants, had to do the work alone. Performing marvels of seamanship, for days he fought a slow rearguard action and brought the majority of the merchantmen safely home. Strict, military discipline could not be applied. Roughness or insolence on the part of the commander was simply not tolerated. Admiral Witte de With, whose passion for the naval service was well known, was so hated for his temper and bluntness that once the crew of a man-of-war on which he was about to raise his flag went on strike when they saw the admiral coming. He stormed with rage, but nothing could be done about it.

The grand pensionary showed an understanding of the problem. At his proposal, Michiel De Ruyter, a Zeelander, was appointed Lieutenant-Admiral of Holland, an extraordinary action for the States, always fanatically provincial. De Ruyter had worked his way up from cabin boy to captain in the merchant service and, having made a small fortune, decided to retire and start business ashore in his native town of Flushing. At the urgent request of the States of Zeeland, he reluctantly consented to accept

a commission as captain in their navy. His fame spread rapidly and a few years later, he received the appointment of the States of Holland which virtually made him commander-in-chief of the Republic's navy. The second Anglo-Dutch war had broken out, and the first naval battle off Lowestoff had seemed to augur a disaster greater even than that of the first war. De Ruyter was the one man who could create order and maintain discipline among officers and crews, and inspire them with enthusiasm for the cause they defended.

Under his leadership the fleet, which in the first sea war against England could hardly be held together in battle, was changed into the powerful force that beat off the attacks of the combined English and French navies in the third North Sea conflict. Officers and crews, formerly so recalcitrant, were raised under De Ruyter's command to furious enthusiasm. Yet De Ruyter never became a professional soldier and never ceased to deplore the rough and bloody character of his work. Other naval commanders, like Witte de With and the younger Tromp, were happy in the frenzy of a naval clash at close quarters, firing broadsides from thirty or forty guns pointblank into the opposite ship, or making fast alongside and boarding it cutlass in hand. The latter was a favorite tactic with the Netherlanders, which is somewhat surprising in view of their fundamental loathing for warfare in general. It was De Ruyter's a-militaristic leadership, his simple manner aboard, his solicitude for the health of his crews, that made him popular; and in this respect his individuality has historical significance. It fits admirably into the general picture of the period, demonstrating what valor, what leadership, could spring from the middleclass of Holland and how this type of Netherlander could compete with the greatest in the same field without ever degenerating into a pure militarist. As the perfect citizen-admiral, de Ruyter deserves his place among the heroes of republicanism; and in a way he admirably fits the conception (of which his contemporaries were so fond) of the Netherland republic as the "Northern Rome."<sup>42</sup>

In 1664, English squadrons attacked and conquered the Dutch settlement on the Hudson and the trading posts in West Africa, initiating the second Anglo-Dutch war which started with a crushing defeat, but was brought to a successful end when De Ruyter sailed his ships into the mouths of the rivers Thames and Medway. In the preceding conflict, the Dutch had lost every major battle. In this conflict, thanks to the energy of John De Witt and the leadership of De Ruyter, they were victorious in all the most important battles. France, supposed to assist the Netherlands under an alliance concluded in 1662, stood aside until forced to act by further political complications. Holland was suddenly confronted with the evil results

of its negligence of West German affairs. Bishop Bernhard of Muenster, having forced the freedom-loving citizenry of his capital into humble obedience, and encouraged by British promises of financial support, suddenly invaded the eastern provinces. The Dutch army, once so famous under Maurice and Frederick Henry, now hardly even deserved the name. The bellicose bishop marched through Overijssel and Guelderland until he was slowed down by the combined efforts of a weak Dutch corps under John Maurice of Nassau and a French auxiliary division. The best way to offset this nuisance, induced by English gold, was to use Dutch gold to stir up trouble on Muenster's eastern boundary, and accordingly this was done. Brunswick and Brandenburg gratefully accepted a commission to invade the bishop's territory. But the unfavorable impression created by this demonstration of the weakness of the Dutch eastern boundary remained. It spoiled the effect of the victories over England. Of what avail were De Ruyter's victories if the land route to the Hague remained open to hostile armies?

Again De Witt understood the danger, but his position was growing more difficult every day. The miserable condition of the army led to an outcry from the Orangist party. De Witt was accused of responsibility for losses suffered in the English war. Did not the prince of Orange's uncle reign in Great Britain? Why not elevate that prince to the dignity of his ancestors, and so restore peace? The rank and file of the Orangists may have believed in the efficacy of his plan, but their leaders knew better. Nevertheless the opportunity to create difficulties for the opposing party was not neglected. While De Witt had to meet this criticism, France took advantage of the apparent weakness of the Republic and of the war with England to re-open a campaign for the conquest of the southern Low Countries. It met with virtually no resistance from Spain, which was unable to defend her rights. But even King Charles II recognized that complete French control over the Flemish coast would be a threat to the safety of England. Unless Louis XIV was willing to ensure his cooperation by major concessions, England would oppose him. For this the help of the Republic was needed.

De Witt was not eager to act with a king he distrusted, who resented his late humiliating defeat by De Ruyter's fleet, and who was opposed to the rule of the aristocracy. If he did so De Witt would be obliged to oppose his country's ally, France. He would rather have negotiated an agreement with King Louis, but the majority of the States was against him. If followed De Witt's policy could have led to a joint conquest of the southern Low Countries by France and the Netherlands, and a combined last ditch defense against England. The outcome of such a struggle could hardly be in

doubt, but such far-reaching views were not in the line of the States. The stabilization of existing conditions, not the strengthening of the Netherlands, was their policy. De Witt, forced to bow to the majority, concluded a treaty with Great Britain which ended the war and created a defensive alliance against France. King Louis was obliged to yield, but from then on, the Republic having wavered between inactivity and intervention, stood alone. The States had refused to side with the weak against the strong or to create the forces necessary for this policy. The alternative policies of siding with Britain and France having failed, the Netherlands now faced the wrath of strong and weak powers alike.

Three years after the victorious Dutch expedition up the Thames, King Charles of Britain seeking revenge, and King Louis bent upon crushing the one power that stood in the way of his conquest of Belgium, concluded an alliance at Dover to destroy the Republic. It was even more than that. The convention of Dover may be called a conspiracy of absolutism against liberty, for had it succeeded, British parliamentary government would have succumbed with Dutch freedom. King Louis next bought the potential support of Sweden, the active participation of that enterprising ecclesiastic, the bishop of Muenster (who swore that his Westphalians now thoroughly subdued would march as long as they got their daily loaf of pumpernickel), and the aid of the archbishop-elect of Cologne and Liège. The prince-elect of Mainz, the duke of Hannover, the prince-elect of Bavaria, even the Emperor himself, were drawn into the scheme by French promises and the lure of French gold. Spain, realizing that the coming war would settle her fate, preferred an heroic end to an inglorious liquidation. Only the prince-elect of Brandenburg voluntarily sided with the Republic.

John De Witt knew that war was coming, and that France was the center of the anti-Dutch combination, but he failed for once to realize the full danger to his beloved Republic. He did not believe in a sudden change of front by Great Britain. Desperately he sought to strengthen the land defenses. Everything he had worked for seemed to crumble before his eyes. The Republic, instead of being respected and at peace with all, was surrounded by enemies. Within the Republic the regime he had helped to build, was disintegrating under the impact of foreign danger. Already young William of Orange, twenty-one years old, had been appointed commander-in-chief for one campaign, a campaign that was to be decisive.

In the spring of 1672, King Louis of France and his generals, the prince of Condé and the viscount of Turenne, took command of an army estimated at one hundred thousand men and marched against the Netherlands. The invasion by the troops of Muenster in 1666 had demonstrated the weakness of the eastern border. So the French commanders planned to march



in a semi-circle around the southern Dutch defenses, cross the Rhine and invade Guelderland from the east. The divisions of Muenster would thus naturally form the right wing of the invading force. The Netherlands had little more than 50,000 badly equipped and poorly trained troops with which to oppose the superior forces of the enemy, double their number. In an idle attempt to divert the French attack a strong garrison was placed at Maastricht, whence the enemy lines of communication could be threatened. The French, refusing to become involved in beleaguering operations which might pin down their forces for many weeks, left an observation corps near the town and marched on. They invaded the Brandenburgian territory of Cleve, occupied without much resistance the fortresses held in that district by Netherland troops, crossed the Rhine and then Guelderland's eastern boundary. Twenty miles to the north, the bishop of Muenster marched into Overijssel.

The successive declarations of war by France, England, Muenster, and Cologne-Liège left the Dutch people utterly confounded. The rapid march of the overwhelming French force into Guelderland added to the general panic. The grand pensionary worked feverishly at the construction of new defenses. Prince William, now commanding the army, had disposed his weak forces behind the shallow river of the IJssel; but he knew the position was untenable for he only had 33,000 men to occupy a twenty-mile line. Two possible defense lines further inland were considered. The more eastern, behind the rivulets of the Grebbe and Eern, could be reinforced to some extent by inundations, but these could neither be made complete nor kept at the desired level. For these reasons this line (which was defended in 1940), was abandoned and a second line of inundations on the boundary of the provinces of Holland and Utrecht was prepared. Inundations required time, however, especially in the summer and before the machine age. Would the defenders have time to put the inundations into effect and fortify the passages through the flooded fields? In the first days of June, the French and Allied armies stood poised for the attack on the eastern bank of the IJssel and the Rhine, outnumbering the defenders three to one. If the French army broke through, it would reach the line of the intended inundations within a week. Strategically the war on land was lost for the Netherlands. It was of little avail that De Ruyter in a tremendous battle near Solebay on England's east coast, held the sea against the combined Allied navies.

Strategically, the Netherlands had lost the war, but the French still had to win it tactically. Never in history was a nation saved from utter defeat without the unintentional assistance of its all but victorious foes. At this critical moment, when the prince of Orange, young and without any

experience of war, correctly supposed that the IJssel line was untenable, Marshall Turenne, master of strategy, decided to outflank that same position by a difficult manoeuvre instead of attacking in front and breaking through at a score of places. The latter manoeuvre which Condé advised, would have ruined the Republic. Turenne's move was the first step towards saving it. On June 12, a French corps crossed the deep and broad Rhine near Lobith and forced the Dutch troops to withdraw from their half-completed defense works behind the shallow IJssel. The retreat proceeded none too well. With difficulty, Prince William brought part of the army behind the inundations that were in preparation. In those summer days the water rose with desperate slowness; and the peasants of Holland and Utrecht, deprived of a political influence for centuries, resented the saving of a government in which they had no share at the expense of the land on which they lived.

King Louis, advancing triumphantly through Guelderland and Utrecht, all unknowingly continued to preserve his enemy from destruction. While his advance guards occupied the town of Utrecht, the king with his main force moved leisurely westward from the IJssel as if deliberately intending to give his opponents a little more time for preparation. His ally the bishop of Muenster showed more energy, he occupied the whole province of Overijssel and lost no time in forcing the States of that province to recognize him as their future lord. While Louis marched west, he led his troops north against Friesland and Groningen.

Even though Louis's slowness gave the Dutch a few days respite, the situation was desperate. On June 21, when Utrecht capitulated to the French, revolution broke out in Zeeland where the people forced the aristocracy to restore the young prince of Orange to the dignity of his ancestors. On the night of the same day John De Witt was attacked in the streets of the Hague and severely wounded. A week later, his regime collapsed. The urban population of Holland revolted and the ruling caste, unprotected against the fury of the masses, capitulated. William became stadhouder of Holland. In the absence of De Witt, the States of Holland gave way to panic. Leiden took the lead in demanding peace at any price. The majority of the States voted to send a special embassy to King Louis, a decision which was subsequently adopted by the States General although in an irregular way by less than a majority. The embassy left for French headquarters while Amsterdam protested violently, calling for a last ditch defense, and the young stadhouder worked day and night to bring the inundation line into a defensible condition. Louis who advanced towards Utrecht, was probably convinced that the war was over and that the States General

would submit to any demands. Consequently he put forward extravagant claims which he failed to support by vigorous military action.

His troops were now in front of the half-completed inundation. The prince of Orange had raised a new army by taking sailors and marines from the navy, by calling out the city guards of adjoining towns, and by arming some of the peasantry. A few thousand Spanish cavalry reinforced his motley troops. Displayed behind the inundations they were quite impressive, and King Louis allowed himself to be bluffed into a belief that the new defenses were very strong. Having scattered half his army in garrisoning useless strongholds, he sat down with the rest of it in front of the inundations. When the negotiations with the French were broken off and unity was restored in the administration of the Republic, the inundations were completed, the soldiers and citizens regained courage, and Louis XIV had allowed his opportunity to pass forever. Bishop Bernhard did his best to do his share of the common task, but the citizens of Groningen returned the fire of his artillery with such vigor that he too desisted. In the second part of the summer the greatest danger had passed. The enemy's progress was halted. The fall rains greatly strengthened the inundation line. King Louis, tired of waiting for surrender, returned to Paris. Brandenburg created a diversion which caused Turenne with part of the French troops, to leave the Netherlands. The time for counterattacks had come.

Not military strength, not even natural defenses like the flooding of the fields, had saved the Republic, but only the grim determination of its leaders—first De Witt, then the prince of Orange—and of the cities of Amsterdam and Groningen and the naval commanders. They impressed the French generals by a power that was only potential, not real. One among them was punished in a most horrible way for his mistakes, which had been far more those of his class than of himself. John De Witt, knowing that his regime had collapsed beyond hope of recovery, asked for his dismissal at the beginning of August. But his opponents were not satisfied. His brother was put on trial and condemned on insufficient grounds. By a plot the former pensionary was lured to the "Gevangenpoort" where his brother was jailed, the city guards of the Hague were mobilized and the cavalry, stationed there to maintain order, called off. A few leaders of the mob then dragged the two brothers out of jail to be murdered in the most beastly way by the city guards. It was the revenge of the middleclass upon the fallen aristocracy. The ousting of De Witt, whose policy had failed, was understandable and justified. His brutal murder remains one of the darkest spots in Netherland history. Once the middleclass had started on the path of revolution, they sought to exploit the opportunity to the full. In

some places demands were made that the burgher-aristocracy share the government with representatives of the city guards and guilds, a foreshadowing of things to come. The prince of Orange restored "order," by which he understood the traditional form of government, under his control instead of that of the leading group in Holland.

In 1673 the war shifted to other theaters. The intervention of Brandenburg and Austria further reduced the chances of a French offensive against the now really strong line of inundations. So the best policy for the Allies seemed to be to gain command of the sea to land troops and attack Holland from the west. But here De Ruyter stood guard, forcing the Allies in fierce battles to give up any such design. With the evacuation of the eastern provinces in the fall of 1673, the invasion of the Netherlands came to an end. Next year King Charles II, violently accused of absolutist designs by the British people, made peace. Muenster and Cologne, in a hopeless position between the Netherlands and Brandenburg, did the same. The war with France dragged on until 1678, but it was fought in the southern Netherlands, where Prince William led the armies of a Dutch-Spanish-Austrian coalition against the French forces under Luxembourg. The Republic had found its place in European politics, siding with the weaker powers against Louis XIV, the great aggressor. The series of English wars came to a close. Although the Dutch conception of the freedom of the sea had not triumphed, English claims to sovereignty over the sea had been definitely defeated. Emerging victorious from a struggle in which they had been surrounded by enemies, the Netherlands had reasserted the independence recognized in 1648.

Prince William had another task besides leading the armies. The Republic of the Netherlands had to be reorganized. Holland proposed to reduce the reconquered provinces of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Overijssel to non-voting members of the Union. That would have transformed the Republic into a Hollandish State. William opposed this, for he did not want to increase the power of the already too influential sea province. The States of Guelderland, dreading the overbearing attitude of the unconquered provinces, offered the ducal crown of their territory to Prince William. Once more a chance to regularize the constitution of the Republic presented itself. William III would have liked to accept the crown, but he wanted the other provinces to follow suit. The States of Zeeland, otherwise so zealous in promoting the interests of Orange, objected. Afraid to oppose the Prince's wishes openly, they appealed to his religious convictions by quoting the Bible:

"Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon: Rule thou over us, both thou and thy sons and son's sons also, for thou hast delivered us from the hand

of Midean. And Gideon said unto them: I will not rule over you, neither shall my sons rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."

William had it in his power to force the consent of the reluctant provinces, both Holland and Zeeland; but he preferred to secure control of public affairs by other means, and contented himself with continuing the quotation of the States of Zeeland:

"And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies, on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the House of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewn unto Israel."

Having dropped the idea of becoming monarch of the Netherlands, Prince William reorganized the constitution of the re-conquered provinces in such a way that his influence in their affairs became paramount, especially in regard to their voting in the States General. With full control over three of the seven votes in that body and with his adherents in power in the other provinces, he became the absolute leader of the Republic's foreign policy and that was all that interested him. The States of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelderland, and Overijssel decided to make the office of stadhouder hereditary in the family of William III. His prestige in Europe rose far above that of any of his predecessors and reached its peak in 1688 when he conducted the "Glorious Revolution" and was elected King of Great Britain. The matrimonial alliance between the families of Stuart and Orange, renewed by the marriage of William with Mary, daughter of the duke of York, later James II, did not on this occasion make the House of Orange a tool of the ambitious policy of the Stuarts but brought about a union of English tradition and Netherland freedom in the final triumph of the parliamentary regime in England.

From the time of his ascent to the British throne, William was the recognized leader of the European coalition against the aggressor-king of France. The Netherland Republic took a prominent part in these conflicts. The army, restored to its former efficiency and brought to a fighting force of 50,000 to 70,000 men, had an important share in the battles fought in Brabant and Flanders. The territory of the Republic was safe from attack. The navy took part in the operations against the French in the Channel and in the Mediterranean and against the Swedes in the Baltic. Dutch ships and Dutch sailors had a share in the conquest of Gibraltar by the British in the war of the Spanish Succession in 1704. An attempt to prevent this war, which broke out after his death, was William's last great diplomatic undertaking. He saw the failure of this attempt, but not the ultimate victory of his principles.

William loved the Netherlands, where he stayed whenever he could leave England. But he was not greatly interested in the administration of his own country. His only concern was to have the support, moral and financial, of the burgher-aristocracy for his European policy. He permitted and even encouraged the formation of cliques. Sometimes sorely tempted to resort to strong action against Amsterdam, where the tradition of passive neutrality secured by an alliance with France persisted for a long time, he always came to friendly agreement in the end. William's administration was, in a sense, a reconciliation of the aristocratic class and the Orangist movement. Both prince and aristocrats distrusted popular political influence, and they were united in considering themselves far above the masses. Many adherents of De Witt's policy had been ousted from office in the critical years after 1672, and there remained some resentment against Orange because of this. But William's administration was long—nearly thirty years—and a new generation grew up, accustomed to new conditions. The Netherland history of this period concerns other matters than the reform of government or foreign policy.

## CHAPTER X

### Ideals of the Eighteenth Century

THE XVIIIth century is usually looked upon as a period of decline in Netherland history. Compared to the glorious age between 1625 and 1675, it seems dull and inert. The contrast is that of a mighty roaring river and a placid inland lake where movement is only on the surface. The atmosphere is dreamy and unreal, not vigorous and refreshing as a hundred years before. This is plain even in a superficial survey of such widely different fields as painting and foreign policy. Painting is the best beloved of Netherland arts and XVIIth century Dutch political influence the pride of the Netherland burgher, so the XVIIIth century stood little chance of winning the favor of posterity. Hence the constant glorification of the XVIIth and deprecation of the XVIIIth century in national history.<sup>43</sup>

There is no doubt that XVIIIth century Dutch history attracts the reader less than that of the age before, so unconsciously the earlier events are placed in the most favorable and later events in the least favorable light. This tendency is historically misleading. We admire Erasmus who, in a turbulent period, described the conversation of friends in a beautiful garden as the height of civilized entertainment; yet we are disgusted with his XVIIIth century followers who put his theory into practice. We are anti-militarist but loathe the least militarist society and government in all Netherland history. There is something purely sentimental and irrational in the attitude of most Netherlanders towards this period.

In what respect did the XVIIIth century represent a decline, compared to the preceding period? If it represented a decline, when did it set in? Is there nothing in which the XVIIIth century was superior to the XVIIth? These questions must be answered before we can judge the relative importance of the two periods. In painting the XVIIIth century has nothing to offer that can possibly compare with the achievements of the preceding decades. To be sure, there were still many good painters. The traditions and models handed down by their predecessors saved the art from complete decay. But beyond question there was a sharp decline which continued beyond the XVIIIth century and reached its lowest level in the early part of the XIXth. Then a new school arose, which has become famous all over the world through the works of Van Gogh and others. No one knows

why art flourishes in one period and declines in another. Capricious change of taste, because of which the XVIIIth century had little use even for Rembrandt's masterpieces, may have strangled Netherland productivity. The bold realism of XVIIth century art did not appeal to ensuing generations which, living in an unreal world of comfort and pleasure, preferred miniature decorations and the small finely executed products of craftsmanship. The change in taste, reflected in artistic production was not abrupt. The last forty years of the XVIIth century, when the power of the Republic reached its peak, saw the slow beginning of a decline in art. Political and artistic decline are by no means related. The revolution of 1572 had seen the dawn of Holland's greatest period; the heroic defense of 1672 scarcely evoked an echo in the world of culture.

Rembrandt's death coincided with a sharp decline in the art of painting, just as Vondel's decease in 1679 did in the history of literature. But here the movement was not so rapid, and if the literary output of the XVIIIth century did not attain the same high level as that of the preceding hundred years, the popularity of the art itself was undiminished. It even suffered from overpopularity, which led to mass production of verse. The unreality of many aspects of this later Dutch civilization makes its literature the more difficult for modern realists to digest. That there was a great deal of interest not only in contemporary writers but also in those of the past is shown by the magnificent editions of the Dutch classics published in the early XVIIIth century. The growing interest in pre-classic literature made possible editions of medieval works which would hardly have commanded attention fifty years before. The last decades of the XVIIth century saw the busy Netherland world of traders and shopkeepers, of artists and craftsmen, transformed into a new one of bankers and merchant princes—gentlemen of leisure interested in letters and in the collection of curios, which might be objects of art or singular items of the most diverse nature. This change fostered scientific progress for, as painting was considered a skilled craft and literary production a pastime, the study of science became the proper occupation for a man of independent means who wanted to be useful to society. Emphasis was placed on mechanics rather than on physics, but the solution of practical problems led naturally to discussions and investigations of fundamental principles.

Ever since the XVIth century mathematics and physics had found ardent students in the Netherlands. Problems of navigation and of military engineering had occupied generations of Dutch scientists. John De Witt had devoted his mathematical talent to problems of finance, and shortly before his downfall he wrote his *Evaluation of Life Insurance*, one of the first texts propounding the mathematical theory upon which all insurance de-



pend. For thirty years (1617-1649), Descartes lived in the Netherlands, where he wrote his *Discourse on Reason*, that profoundly influenced Netherland research. After the close of the XVIIth century the work was continued by generations of scientists, who were only occasionally connected with the universities. While professors could study mathematics, they could rarely study physics, for their pitifully meager salaries did not provide the means to carry on experiments. In spite of Leiden's worldwide reputation, university professors were not esteemed socially. The scientist who did not happen to be heir to a considerable estate was faced with the choice between becoming a skilled worker (grinding lenses, for instance, like Baruch De Spinoza); becoming a physician, which might offend his conscience as the prevailing practice of medicine was of dubious value; or living and dying in poverty on bad terms with his more practical relatives and neighbors, like Jan Swammerdam, the brilliant observer of insect life.<sup>44</sup> This conflict of conscience was most serious. Descartes' rationalist methods of scientific research laid bare the quackery of medical remedies, sacred by tradition and so deeply imbedded in popular belief that some of them persist to the present day.

The teaching of Descartes' philosophy had been forbidden at Leiden University in 1656. The wording of the decree was significant, for it was issued only to prevent violent dissent among the members of Leiden's faculty. John De Witt himself studied Descartes' works on geometry with apparent satisfaction. Spinoza's works, permitted to circulate in the time of the grand pensionary, were forbidden in the reaction that followed the crisis of 1672. The wave of rationalism could not be stopped by any such measures and its principles continued to be applied both in the sciences and outside the world of abstract thought. While Swammerdam, a strict rationalist in his methods of insect life, sought to combine the results of his work with deep religious faith, Christian Huyghens, the greatest Dutch physicist of the pre-modern period, unhesitatingly rejected anything that was not based on reason, in all fields of knowledge. At this time the study of mathematics was considered dangerous to the faith of budding theologians. This antithesis was to some extent a direct continuation of that between Erasmianism and dogmatism in the XVIth century.

Christian Huyghens was the typical gentleman-mechanic who made theoretical discoveries while seeking the solution of practical problems. Navigators were struggling with the determination of exact longitude at sea, which required an exact instrument for measuring time. This resulted in the discovery of the pendulum clock and, although for various technical reasons the instrument did not prove satisfactory, its discovery led to many innovations. The polishing of lenses and the theoretical exploration of

optics were also combined in Huyghens' work. However, his research work is of less interest in Netherland history than the place Huyghens himself held in the community of his day. The son of Constantijn Huyghens, secretary to three princes of Orange, poet, scholar and diplomat—certainly one of the most remarkable men in XVIIth century Holland—Christian was accustomed to a leisurely and independent life, which he found it difficult to maintain after his father's death. To accept a professorship would have been a social degradation. So he chose the position of head of the Academy of Sciences, created by King Louis XIV of France, and lived for fifteen years in Paris. Thus the brilliant gentleman-mechanic, first physicist of his age, became himself an article in the curio cabinet of a monarch who cared no more for science than a collector cares for an odd piece of furniture his servant has picked up in an antique shop. Huyghens learned that, like other items, a "human curiosity" can be discarded at the owner's whim. Back in Holland, the great man prolonged his gentleman's life with difficulty, until he died, cynical and alone, in 1695.

Scientific research provided a bond between Netherlanders of various classes. Like poetry, mathematics and physics were interests that regardless of rank brought together people who had leisure. The famous microscope builder, Anthony Leeuwenhoek, originally a shopkeeper and later provided because of his scientific distinction with several semi-honorary positions by the government of Delft, had the same access to learned circles as Huyghens the aristocrat. Like Spinoza and Huyghens, Leeuwenhoek devoted much of his time to grinding lenses, an art in which he became a master. His scientific reputation was based on observations made with the microscopes he constructed with his own hands. Among other discoveries, he was the first to describe human blood corpuscles. Here again we find closely related the work of the skilled mechanic and the physicist.

The Netherlands were an ideal place to collect "curiosities." Ships from the East and West Indies brought an immense variety of objects and natural specimens into the country. The directors of the East India Company instructed their government at Batavia to collect rare plants and seeds for the Botanic Garden in Leiden. The Company's factory in Nagasaki, Japan, provided Japanese objects of art. Porcelain was imported in such quantity that a well assorted collection of china became the general fashion. Other collections, even more admired by contemporaries, appear singular to us. In those early days of anatomical research, physician-anatomists opened their "anatomic cabinets" to the public, who came to see dissected human bodies and other anatomic marvels, just as crowds now visit Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors or the neat collections of bones of long-deceased Capucin monks in one of Rome's most frequented churches. This general

curiosity about the phenomena of nature had its advantage in spreading interest and encouraging research in medicine and biology, even in archeology and ethnology. The wealthiest of the collectors sent to the far corners of the world for more material and even defrayed the cost of long voyages undertaken for that purpose. In the last quarter of the XVIIth century Amsterdam counted among its burgomasters one mathematician of no small ability, Johan Hudde, and the greatest promoter of scientific geography of the century, Nicholas Witsen.

Nicholas Witsen was the most remarkable of these all-round promoters of learning. Born in 1641, he belonged to an influential Amsterdam family which gave him as a youth opportunities that determined his future career. When he was fifteen, he accompanied his father on a diplomatic mission to England. Cromwell, noticing the boy's interest, showed him *his* curiosities, including such items as the axe with which King Charles I had been beheaded. From objects of this type, Witsen turned quickly to more useful interests. At the Amsterdam Athenaeum he studied astronomy and philosophy, tried his hand at poetry—he wrote a comedy, now long forgotten—and learned engraving. A series of etchings illustrating Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are known to be his work. Skilled craftsmanship had always a place in education in the XVIIth century, and the division of time between study and handiwork, between work and play, was certainly better balanced than in the twentieth century Netherlands. Young Witsen went to Leiden to study law; all Holland's young aristocrats studied law at Leiden. But his interest turned rather to the philosophy of Descartes and Professor Golius' courses on oriental languages. Golius also taught mathematics, a combination that becomes understandable from the fact that the learned professor was the first European to discover the relation between medieval Persian and Chinese chronology. Witsen completed his law studies, but in the meantime had published treatises on economics.

The great opportunity of his youth came in 1664, when he accompanied an embassy to Russia. He was a gentleman in the suite of the ambassadors, with plenty of time to study the land and the people. In Moscow he decided to collect information about the peoples living between Russia and China. In those days the Russians did not give great freedom to foreign diplomats. Witsen was even discouraged from learning Russian. Hearing that a Kal-muck prince from the boundaries of Asia was in Moscow, he found an opportunity to meet him. "His language," Witsen said, "sounded like the cackling of a turkey." He could not gather much information from the prince, for the meeting had to be secret. He was not permitted to see maps of Siberia which he knew to exist in the imperial palace. This was enough to determine him to fill in the blanks in the maps of Asia and to draw a

detailed picture of that country. He spent twenty years on this task. His position as a director of the East India Company enabled him to have information collected from Japanese and Chinese geographers. Letters from Jesuit missionaries in China were of invaluable assistance. Most useful of all was his friendship with the new czar of Russia, Peter the Great. From all these sources he compiled his *North and East Tartary* with a large map of Siberia, both works amazingly accurate for that time.

Witsen's work, interesting and characteristic as it is, would not deserve so large a place in this book had it not been for the multiplicity of his activities and their truly astounding consequences. Twice he sent Cornelis De Bruyn, the painter, on far journeys to make drawings of the remains of the ancient world, first to Egypt, Syria and Anatolia; then via Russia to Persia to visit the ruins of Persepolis, and on to Batavia. His botanical experiments mark the starting point of a revolution in the Malay world. By the middle of the XVIIth century Europe was acquainted with coffee. The center of production was southern Arabia and the African area opposite, across the Red Sea. Coffee trees were brought from India both to Batavia and to Amsterdam. Witsen experimented with the coffee plants he received in Amsterdam and succeeded in producing a small quantity of beans, which the burgomasters tasted and declared "rather flat." Apparently Amsterdam's climate was not right! But Witsen's interest encouraged the principal estate owners around Batavia to continue their experiments in Java. At his request, the directors of the Company offered a reward for the successful production of coffee in Java. A few years later the first Java coffee arrived in Amsterdam and the social and agricultural transformation of Java had begun.

This interest in botanical and agricultural experiments was combined with a traditional Netherland interest in gardening. Here the American thinks, of course, of the tulips and bulb fields of Haarlem. The tulips that originated in the Near East are said to have been introduced shortly after 1573 by Charles de l'Ecluse, the famous botanist and first director of Leiden's Botanic Gardens. In the XVIIth century tulip growing became a mania, which in 1636 culminated in the wildest speculation, more than ten thousand guilders being paid for a rare specimen. Around 1700, Haarlem became, as it still is, the center of bulb-growing. From there bulbs were exported to England, Spain, Italy, and many other countries. About the same time, Holland's city aristocracy and wealthy merchant class adorned the most beautiful parts of the countryside—along the Vecht in Utrecht and the fertile dry ground between the dunes and the polders—with their country houses and estates. Literature celebrated pastoral life, painters visualized ideal landscapes and the descendants of Holland's sea captains, now rich

and with plenty of leisure, fled from the city into a dream world. Moreover, a desire *to create* seized these men who had amassed fortunes from the outwardly unproductive handling of merchandise and apparently still more sterile banking enterprises. Their eagerness to bend nature to the needs of humanity, by discovering its laws and increasing its beauty and productivity, was expressed in a new utilitarianism, which has left deep traces in Netherland history. It was not agriculture in the broad sense of the word that interested the utilitarian gentlemen. Hardly any technical books on agriculture were published in the Netherlands before 1750, while in neighboring countries, especially Germany, such publications were popular. But treatises on gardening were numerous. The Botanical Gardens of Leiden University and those of Amsterdam were the most famous in Europe. It was horticultural not agricultural production that caught the fancy of Holland's society.

Around 1700, Holland, with its dykes and canals, its thousands of windmills, neat farms, well-kept cattle, numerous quaint towns, comfortable houses and well dressed people, its curiosities gathered from East and West, its flowers and rare plants, looked like a large "curio cabinet" itself. Foreigners came to marvel at the little territory that wielded such wide power across the world. The picture of Holland as tulip land, with oddly dressed people, was formed in the minds of non-Hollanders at that time, and has survived until the present, to hinder the understanding of Netherland problems today. But this was a later development. In the XVIIIth century there was much to learn in Holland. Four hundred foreign students in medicine at Leiden University were not exceptional.

Of the foreigners visiting the Netherlands, the most interesting was Peter the Great of Russia. The czar had learned about the marvels of Holland from Dutch artisans, traders, and physicians in the foreign colony of Moscow. A Hollander built his first boats and taught him how to sail a ship. Dutch workers built wharves at Archangelsk; and Peter who loved to talk with Dutch sea captains there was filled with such admiration for the Netherlanders that he began to imitate the clothing, language, and manners of his sailor friends. These were not those of the best western way of life, and a natural affinity between sailors of the land of Schiedamgin and the emperor of the vodka-producing country resulted in scenes better imagined than described. In 1697 Peter undertook his famous trip through western Europe. Impatient to arrive in Holland, the czar left his numerous suite behind and hurried west. First he visited Zaandam, northwest of Amsterdam, a great whaling and ship building center. In the belief that he could remain incognito, this six-foot-and-a-half-inch giant, who spoke a few words of broken Dutch and was well known to several

workers and sailors of the town, pretended to be looking for a job and rented one of the smallest houses of the place. As was to be expected, the Zaandammers took quite an interest in him, and the czar furious at not having his own way and accustomed to direct methods, used his fists liberally on the too-curious spectators. The Dutch workers, unwilling to be thrashed even by an Imperial Majesty, responded in kind. Peter moved to Amsterdam. Here Burgomaster Nicholas Witsen, with whom the czar had corresponded for a long time, was at hand to assist him. As a director of the East India Company, he provided the czar with living quarters on one of the wharves of the Company, where he was well protected from popular curiosity. Here Peter the Great worked for four months. This gave him an opportunity to visit all the curiosities of the city: the anatomical cabinets, which for a time gave him the idea of becoming a physician; collections of art, the workshops of engravers—here too he tried to learn the craft in a few days;—and numerous factories and storehouses. Whatever interested him, he wanted to buy and ship to Russia. Hundreds of artisans were recruited to modernize his empire. So deep an impression did Netherland civilization make on the czar that he decided to make the small country on the North Sea, the model of the modern Russia of his dreams. Dutch was to be *the* foreign language studied in Russia. The Russian navy was reorganized on the pattern of the Dutch. This Netherland influence lasted only as long as Czar Peter reigned. In other parts of the world the effects of Netherland utilitarianism were more lasting.

In the last years of Governor-General Maetsuycker's rule a change came over Batavia and its small Dutch population. For fifty years Dutch and Chinese had been living cooped up within the little town. Outside its walls was the jungle where His Excellency the Governor-General occasionally hunted the tiger or the rhinoceros, and where lawless elements—the district had no settled population—lurked in the hope of capturing a Chinese or killing a Hollander. But towards 1681 the picture changed. Enterprising Chinese had cleared some ground and worked small sugar plantations and mills. A motley crowd of Indonesians, including all tribes and peoples except the Javanese, built their villages under the protection of Batavia's artillery and tilled the soil, growing rice for the townspeople. The Batavian Dutch, too, turned to agriculture and many estates were developed outside the walls. These settlers were no longer the die-hard, narrow-minded traders of Coen's time. Then there was a group of broad-minded men, whose influence became predominant in 1684, when Johannes Camphuijs was appointed governor-general. There was Pieter van Hoorn, who had gone to the imperial court of Peking as an ambassador and had published a didactic poem propounding the teachings of Confucius, a hitherto un-

heard-of tribute to the wisdom of the "blind and ignorant heathen." Camphuijs himself was an author who wrote on the history of Batavia, composed a description of Japan, and encouraged learning. Johan van Hoorn, Pieter's son, governor-general from 1704-1709, was one of the first officials of the Company who showed real interest in native affairs. Georges Chastellein built three large estates during his life time, one of which he bequeathed to his former slaves, whose descendants to the present day form the Christian community of Depok and hold the estate in common ownership. These were the men with whom Witsen was in contact; Chastellein was the first to produce coffee on his plantations. They all dreamed of changing the Company's system completely, of attracting Netherland colonists and giving greater freedom of commerce to Dutch citizens in the colony. Both in Java and in the Netherlands the monopoly of the Company was sharply criticized, but too many vested interests were involved for any radical change to be made.

The introduction of the coffee tree was the beginning of an economic revolution in Java. The Dutch Company had previously confined itself to acquiring and exporting the natural products of the islands, introducing no innovations. With coffee production the Company started on a new course, exploitation of the *potential* instead of the *existing* resources of the country. Under the new system Java, the only island on which the Company controlled a large area of land, gained prominence over the older centers of production such as Amboina and Ternate in the Moluccas. Around 1677 the Batavian Government had acquired sovereignty over the mountainous districts south of Batavia. The native district chiefs, called "Regents" by the Dutch in imitation of the aristocratic class in Holland, became the Company's vassals. Instead of delivering given quantities of rice and a certain number of laborers to their native overlords, they now delivered a certain amount of produce, which the Company, never forgetting its "exclusively commercial" character, pretended to buy but at fixed prices decidedly advantageous to the buyers. In the first years of coffee production the Batavian government, as yet without experience in this particular matter, fixed the price rather high, with the result that the new crop spread amazingly, and great wealth was amassed in the hands of some of the Javanese "Regents." Faced with a new problem, the directors in Amsterdam, after long deliberation, but little foresight, decided to maintain their traditional policy of keeping the quantity transported low and prices high, instead of giving free scope to production and enlarging the turn-over in Europe by lowering prices. To be sure the choice was not an easy one and there were many problems connected with such a change in commercial policy, but the policy adopted by the directors of limiting coffee

production and drastically lower prices was basically wrong, and harmed the interests of the Company as much as it exasperated the native population.

The economic ideas of the liberal group around Camphuijs were definitely rejected by the authorities at home. Their influence in political developments in the East Indies is discernible in the system of administration applied to the newly acquired Preanger districts in West Java. The Statutes of Batavia had granted certain privileges to the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia in matters of private law. Faced with the problem of administering justice to a large indigenous population, Batavia had decreed in 1708 that the native judiciary should be left intact and that cases between Indonesians could be settled before their own courts and according to native law. Since it was of the highest importance that Dutch officials, to whom the supervision of native rulers was entrusted, should know the content of native law, some of them took up its study. This was the beginning of a new field of learning—the study of *adat*-law, the Indonesian customary law—in which progress was made in the XIXth and XXth centuries. Frederik Gobijs was the first to penetrate the complexities of this new subject. He was the first to realize that among the Javanese both the ancient customary law and the later Mohammedan law were in force and must be clearly distinguished. Several generations of law students had passed before the full implications of this were understood.

The estates of Witsen's friends in Batavia were the beginning of modern Java, the island of multifarious export crops produced by combined European-Indonesian efforts. In these same years around the turn of the century, Governor Simon Van der Stel wrought a similar change in the economic structure of the still halting colony of the Cape. Van der Stel, born on the island of Mauritius and thus a native *Afrikaander* married into the Amsterdam family of Six, one of whose members was the friend and protector of Rembrandt. Van der Stel promoted colonization vigorously, but he wanted it to be purely Dutch. In the twenty years of his administration he brought the number of settlers at the Cape up to around 800, of whom 150 were French Huguenots driven from their native land by Louis XIV's harsh decrees of persecution. Cattle breeding was their main occupation. The records indicate that these 800 people owned 3,000 head of cattle and 30,000 sheep. Wine growing was also encouraged, but was more successful in quantity than in quality. Even the sailors of the East Indiamen made wry faces at Capetown's beverage. Van der Stel, who really made the tiny African settlement into a colony, lived and worked in the style of his Dutch and Batavian contemporaries. Planting trees and experimenting with new crops were a passion with him. The Company's vegetable gar-



den in Capetown became a beautiful botanic garden of great scientific interest. The Governor's estate impressed Dutch and foreign visitors by the fine architecture of his house, the model of Cape-colonial style.

The conceptions that animated this Netherland civilization at the turn of the century naturally changed the outlook of the people on many problems that had agitated the nation sixty-odd years before. Religious tolerance, rarely accepted in theory, became a general practice. Complaints by the synods of the official church against "Popish impudence" and against Anabaptists or Jews ceased in the time of John De Witt. The Mennonites of Groningen and Friesland had shown such patriotic zeal in the critical months of 1672, that the States of Friesland decided to grant them official freedom of worship. Even the Catholics, mistrusted as potential fifth columnists for France, had proved better patriots in 1672 than might have been expected after the unjust oppression to which they had been subjected. Freedom of worship was not granted them until a century later, but in practice they were able to follow their own rites by paying protection to the police officers. When a schism occurred in connection with the Jansenist movement in France and Belgium, the States of Holland even took official cognizance of the existence of a Roman Catholic Church within the boundaries of the Republic. This action may have been prompted by the hopes of seeing Netherland Catholics form a national Church, which would have removed some obstacles to their being granted greater freedom of worship. It brought to light the existence of excellent personal relations between prominent Catholic priests and members of the burgher-aristocracy. The schism, which failed to gain support among the Catholics, resulted in the renewal—but as a dead letter—of previous decrees against the presence of Jesuits in the Netherlands. Members of the States General, which banished Jesuit missionaries from the country, maintained correspondence with learned followers of St. Ignatius all over the world.

The tolerant attitude of the Netherland city governments, especially that of Amsterdam, provided a haven of refuge for thousands of Jews when the persecution of these people broke out again in eastern Europe. The great Cossack revolution in Poland, a national revolt of Ukrainians against Poles and Jews, drove thousands of Israelites to the west. In Amsterdam, where the older Portuguese Jewish settlements flourished, new congregations were established. German-Jewish, Polish-Jewish, and Lithuanian-Jewish groups founded their own synagogues, which later were united. The newcomers were far more numerous, but also much poorer than the earlier Jewish immigrants from the southwest. There was sufficient freedom of worship and trade to make Amsterdam a point of attraction for the persecuted. The new synagogue of the Portuguese congregation begun

in 1670, cost 186,000 guilders to build, an enormous sum for the time. The building is so large and conspicuous that its very existence was a monument to freedom of worship in an otherwise still intolerant age. Latin Jews continued to come in during the XVIIIth century and Amsterdam was soon the first big city in western Europe with a sizeable percentage of Jewish population.

The ruling class were determined not to submit to dictation from the official church. The burgomasters of Amsterdam protected Balthazar Bekker, a minister driven from Friesland because of his Cartesian opinions, whose book, *The Haunted World*, had stirred up discussion in 1691. In this work he sought to dispel superstitious beliefs in sorcery and witchcraft, giving rational explanations for extraordinary phenomena of nature. The States of Friesland protected the small sect of the Labadists, Christian-communists, who had selected a country house in that province in which to carry out their social-religious experiment. Later some of the Labadists moved to America, part of them to Pennsylvania (William Penn had visited their Frisian home on one of his travels on the Continent), and others to Surinam. In this tropical country the socialist community rapidly disintegrated; and the Labadists, though champions of equality, were even accused of being the worst of all slave-owners. The relative tolerance practised in the XVIIth century gradually developed into an accepted principle of tolerance. Before the end of the XVIIIth century and the French Revolution, demands for the equality of Catholics and Protestants were formulated.

In regard to religious problems, the XVIIIth century represents a stabilization of XVIIth century trends. The same is true of nearly all phases of Netherland life. The half century between 1650 and 1700 was marked by extensive research in mathematics, physics, botany, and medicine, mostly carried on outside the universities. In the ensuing fifty years the results of this research were recorded, systematized, and spread by the universities. The story of William 'sGravesande, professor at Leiden and famous physicist, illustrates the transition from the amateur gentleman-physicist to the professor and research worker. 'sGravesande had studied and practised law, but devoted most of his time to mathematics, and in 1717 was asked to take the chair of mathematics at Leiden University. Here he pursued his researches but, as the university had no money to spend on laboratories, he made his own instruments, and his biographer asserts that these were of such excellent quality that they were still in use in the university laboratory in 1876! He did his share in spreading the knowledge of the preceding generation of physicists by publishing a complete edition of Christian Huyghens' works. Herman Boerhaave, the greatest physician of his time and

an eminent teacher of medicine, was the editor of Swammerdam's book on insect life. Thus, the academic world adopted and spread the knowledge of the amateurs who had pioneered a generation before. To collect and publish the knowledge of preceding generations was the typical and productive task of the XVIIIth century. Boerhaave was by no means an innovator in his field. His eminent ability to teach others what older scholars had discovered, and his textbooks, translated into most European languages, established his rank among contemporary professors of medicine.

Not only in the fields of physics and medicine, but also in philology and other sciences, the XVIIIth century edited and published the work of preceding centuries. Balthasar Huydecooper edited the works of Vondel and of medieval authors. Peter Burman published standard editions of the classics with XVIIIth century commentaries. In philology, new vistas were opened by Albert Schultens, who continued the Arabic and Hebrew studies that had flourished at Leiden since the beginning of the XVIIth century. Schultens was the first to perceive the interrelation of the Semitic languages and to interpret the Hebrew of the Bible through comparative Semitic philology. Lambert Ten Cate of Utrecht was the first to publish an etymological dictionary of the Dutch language. In this period when the East India Company still flourished, and oriental studies were naturally of great interest, a work in five folio volumes on the Malay archipelago found enough subscribers to make its publication possible. François Valentijn, former minister of the Church of Amboina and Batavia, who produced this compilation, included in it texts by Rumphius and Camphuijs. In the political field, attention turned again to the period of De Witt whose diplomatic correspondence was published.

Within ten years, the historian Johaanes Wagenaar published his enormous twenty-volume history of the Netherlands. Wagenaar determined the tradition of Netherland history for a hundred years to come, and his influence is still noticeable in Dutch textbooks. For him Netherland history was the story of the people of the Seven Provinces. It includes only political events. Neither Rembrandt nor Spinoza is once mentioned in his twenty volumes. And to Wagenaar, the people meant the "decent people"—the ruling caste and occasionally the middleclass. Princes and their deeds had of course to be recorded, but with little interest. The common people were never mentioned, except to refer to their "unruliness." In other words, Wagenaar's book was an historical plea for the rule of the oligarchy, whose authority derived from the consent of the middleclass as well as from their own position. In support of this Tacitus' story of Civilis and his Batavi is quoted at length, but middleclass citizens must not "abuse" their right to remonstrate with the oligarchs. If their remonstrance is rejected, they must

admit having been misinformed. In such an interpretation, it was easy to admit popular influence in theory, for it was bound to remain illusory in practice.<sup>45</sup>

So in all its aspects the XVIIIth century was a period of crystallization and certainly not a period of decline as has so often been alleged. It differed from the XVIIth century, but the change had come gradually through a long period of transition beginning shortly after 1650. The main criticism by patriotic historiographers against the XVIIIth century Netherland community, however, is that it lost its hold on international affairs and forfeited the influential position the Republic had maintained throughout the XVIIth century and even up until 1715. The leaders of the Republic neglected the army and navy and refused to share responsibility in settling Europe's problems. When an explanation is offered of this political apathy, it usually is that a rapid decline in trade and industry set in with the turn of the century. To complete our comparison between the two periods under discussion, we must examine the extent to which criticism of later Netherland foreign policy is justified, as well as actual economic developments between 1700 and 1800.

In the light of the historical development, described in the preceding chapter, the foreign policy of the Republic after the death of the Stadhouder-King William (1702) appears perfectly logical. The Republic took an energetic part in the War of the Spanish Succession to keep France out of the southern Low Countries. The Netherlands, having a greater interest than any other country in the fate of the Belgian provinces, were determined to have the deciding voice in any discussions concerning them. Seventy years before, the merchants of Holland had been reluctant to allow their stadhouder to conquer all or part of Belgium. They had secured economic control over the maritime trade of Belgium, but refused to incorporate the country in the Union, either as a free member or a subject territory. In the first decade of the XVIIIth century, they decided to secure economic and military control over the area once for all. When that was accomplished without damage to the alliance with Britain, the object of forty years of war seemed to have been achieved. France was humiliated and a repetition of the catastrophe of 1672 made impossible. In the Baltic, Sweden's power was crumbling before Russia and her allies, and the future safety of the Baltic trade seemed to be guaranteed. Already Netherland ships were finding their way to the new port of St. Petersburg. In the Mediterranean only the Barbary pirates still caused annoyance. The gates to both inland seas were open, and the North Sea and the Channel were protected by the alliance with Britain. In this happy position, the Netherlands seemed to be at liberty to resume their favorite foreign policy of neutrality.

In the War of the Spanish Succession, the duke of Marlborough, commander-in-chief of the allied Dutch and British armies, conquered the Belgian provinces. The States General immediately assumed political control over the conquered area in spite of Austria's protests. If Belgium were to be transferred to another ruler, the States would do it and determine the conditions to which the new ruler must agree. Unfortunately, they let the right moment for making peace go by, and when they finally reached an agreement, they were forced to drop several of their initial demands. Belgium, as part of the Austrian Habsburg monarchy, was to be occupied by a joint Dutch and Austrian force, supported partly from Belgian funds. The economic supremacy of the Netherlands over Belgium was rigorously maintained. The States General had hoped to acquire full possession of the district of Venlo and Roermond along the Meuse, which had once belonged to the duchy of Guelders, but were disappointed. They received only the town of Venlo, all the remainder of the territory being divided between Austria and Prussia.

Notwithstanding this setback, the main objective of the Netherlands seemed to be achieved. The Republic, keeping a watchful eye on the new Austrian regime in Brussels, relapsed into blissful peace, which the leaders hoped would permit them to restore the national finances and give the people an opportunity to devote their energy to industry and commerce. So they shut their eyes as far as possible to the diplomatic problems created by Spain's attempt to rebuild her empire in Italy. However, they grew very energetic the moment the Emperor created a Belgian East India Company to revive that country's foreign trade. With Britain's help this "impudent" competition from a miserably weak neighbor was forcibly suppressed. The Republic sank back into ease, satisfied with having again demonstrated her influence over the Belgian provinces, when war broke out over the Polish succession. It mattered little to the Republic whether King Louis XV's father-in-law or Emperor Charles's friend from Saxonia presided over the unruly Polish Diet. The States General demanded that the war be waged elsewhere than on Belgium's traditional battlefields, and the belligerents were pleased to acquiesce.

The policy of the Netherland Republic in the XVIIIth century has often been described as undignified, but was by no means so. In a sense the very limitation of its aims and directness of its tactics lent it dignity. Yet it was weak because (and here the XVIIIth century leaders are less to blame than their predecessors)—it completely neglected the eastern boundary. The XVIIIth century harvested the evil fruits of XVIIth century negligence. In the war of 1672, Dutch garrisons in Rhineland towns had been driven out by the French, and the sovereign of these towns, the prince-elector of

Brandenburg in his capacity of duke of Cleve, refused to allow them to return. Once the Dutch troops had withdrawn, the age-old rights of the States of Cleve were rapidly and rudely abolished by the Hohenzollerns. The last appeals for help from their towns and nobility went unheeded by the States General. In 1715, the Hohenzollerns, now kings of Prussia, acquired part of Upper Guelders. Towns like Guelders, which for seven centuries had been part of one of the Lowland provinces, were separated forever from the Low Countries. Districts west of the Meuse were also brought under Prussian control, which now spread across both the lower Meuse and the Rhine. The Netherlands were hemmed in on their southeastern border by the rising military power of Germany. In 1744, the same thing happened in the northeast, when East Friesland fell to King Frederick II of Prussia. The Netherland garrisons maintained in Emdden and Leeroort on the river Ems were forced to leave. With the advent of Prussian rule, High German became the official language of these districts. The use of Dutch was vigorously opposed, Dutch literary and artistic influence in northern Germany ceased to exist, and with the rapid rise of literary standards in Germany the cultural relations between the two countries were reversed. The States General believed that they had secured the Republic against all possible dangers from the south. They had no inkling of danger from the east.

The political arrangements by which the Republic, theoretically allied with Britain, allowed France to buy Dutch neutrality in her wars with Austria by guaranteeing the integrity of Belgium, admirably suited Netherland wishes. Through connivance with France, the astute merchant-diplomats enjoyed security on land. The combination was too subtle, however, to withstand the shock of a grave crisis. As the success of their diplomacy had strengthened the Dutch aristocracy's false belief in their mastery of foreign policy, the awakening was all the more rude. The year 1740 brought the crisis. France supported the princes-electors of Bavaria, Saxonia, and Brandenburg-Prussia in their claim against Maria Theresa, heirless to the Austrian Empire. King George II of Great Britain, as elector of Hannover, sided with the Habsburgs. The Netherland Republic decided to remain neutral so long as France and Great Britain were not formally involved in the war, a policy made easier by the friendly promise of the French Government not to invade Maria Theresa's Belgian territory. When in 1744 France declared war on both Austria and Britain and actually invaded Belgium, the Republic vainly tried to remain neutral. She was obliged, however, to help Britain resist a Jacobite invasion organized from France, and to pay subsidies to various German princes to align them in the common front against France and Prussia. Thereupon France invaded the Netherlands proper, and notwithstanding a spirited resistance

on the frontier, the defense crumbled so rapidly that a repetition of 1672 seemed near. A general desire for peace and the French king's lack of ambition saved the Republic from greater disaster. The peace concluded in 1748 restored the Netherlands in all their possessions but damaged their prestige irretrievably.

The military defeats inflicted by the armies of France in 1745 and 1747 were not nearly so serious as those inflicted in 1666 by the petty Westphalian principality of Muenster. Yet the latter was without consequence, while the former reduced the Republic to the rank of a secondary power. The paradox had many causes, foremost among which was the changed internal political status of the Republic. For a short survey of this internal development, we have to go back to the year 1702, when Stadhouder William III died. In that year the uncontrolled oligarchy of De Witt's day had been restored, not altogether out of principle but more or less accidentally, since the stadhouder left no descendants.<sup>46</sup> He left his personal estate to his cousin John William of Nassau, stadhouder of Friesland, whose inheritance was disputed by other relatives of the House of Orange, including the Hohenzollerns, descendants of Frederick Henry through his daughter. The Frisian branch of the Nassau family had never enjoyed any great prestige outside the northern provinces. In Holland they were looked down upon, as any country squire from the East might be by Amsterdam's burgher-aristocrats. John William, who was rapidly gaining prestige because of his heroic conduct in the War of the Spanish Succession, met his death on a stormy night when the ferry boat on which he was crossing the Moerdijk capsized. His posthumous son inherited his political offices in the northern provinces and, by a settlement with his Prussian relatives, the estates of the House of Orange on Netherland soil. The principality of Orange went to the Hohenzollerns, who ceded it to France; but the title of Prince of Orange was used both by the Netherland Nassaus and the kings of Prussia.

In these circumstances a revival of the "True and Only Freedom" of De Witt's time was natural. Once in control, the city oligarchs quickly recovered their old taste for power and revived the political ideals of De Witt, who thus obtained an honorable place in Netherland forty years after his brutal assassination. As long as the War of the Spanish Succession lasted, the States General proved equal to their task. After the war had been brought to a moderately successful conclusion, the leaders of the Republic devoted their energies to a reduction of armaments and a restoration of the finances of the State. For the first time in many decades the credit of the Netherlands was seriously impaired. For several years the interest on the national debt of Holland could not be paid in full. The only way to restore

the public finances acceptable to the oligarchs was by wholesale disarmament and economy. Another method which might have brought considerable relief was a reform of the tax system and a reduction of profiteering by city officials—but the ruling caste stubbornly refused even to consider it. While the States of Holland could not meet their obligation to the Union, burgomasters of Amsterdam sold public offices for scores of thousands of guilders or appropriated them for their own families. The common man was heavily taxed by excise levies on food and other necessities. The wealthier class sometimes paid heavy property taxes and when need was direct, contributed to a forced loan at low interest—which brought sizeable amounts to the treasury.

Administration abuses made any thorough reform of the financial and tax system impossible. The Netherlands in this respect were probably no worse, perhaps even better than France or England, but the Republic had to husband its resources more carefully than these larger and more populous kingdoms. In the Netherlands, the administration became particularly hateful to the people because it served the interests only of a small group of self-appointed dictators of the country. The ruling caste grew smaller and smaller. Dominant cliques within the caste tended to form a superaristocracy and some offices, for instance that of secretary to the States General, virtually became hereditary. In Friesland, where remnants of the ancient democratic system had survived throughout the ages, many of the farm sites with votes were bought or held under mortgages by a few families, who thus controlled the voting in the States Assembly. The irony of history turned this system against its protagonists, who, when they were in financial difficulties, had to approach merchants who in turn took mortgages on their estates and thus secured the final and deciding voice in provincial politics!

The oligarchy, incapable of any sacrifice for the national cause, was obviously not prepared to follow a consistent policy. The army and navy disintegrated, the navy more than the army, for Britain was an ally and France a potential enemy. The provinces no longer contributed to the equipping of new ships, though this was more necessary than ever. The steadily increasing size of warships presented a difficult problem for none of the Dutch ports except Flushing possessed a harbor deep enough to permit large ships of the line to enter. These ships could not reach Amsterdam through the shallow waters of the Zuiderzee and could not enter the Meuse. Important harbor works and the construction of naval bases near Flushing and at Holland's northern point were indicated, but because the projects would hurt vested interests, they were doomed regardless of national interest.



Here we touch upon one of the greatest contrasts between the XVIIth and XVIIIth century Netherlands. In the XVIIth century the leading class knew that it had to fight and work to maintain the Republic's newly acquired political prestige. They competed strenuously and successfully in trade and industry. Money that poured in as the result of hard work was readily spent to protect the sources of wealth. In the XVIIIth century the prestige of the Republic was established, and the ruling class expected to maintain that prestige by diplomatic means. Money was still plentiful, but the sources of wealth were no longer the same. Those who had money wanted to enjoy it, not to win more in a constant bitter struggle against relentless competition. As a French diplomat said, the Republic resembled Tantalus. Standing in wealth up to the lips she was unable to reach it herself, when for others there was plenty.

If the economic position of the Netherlands had dropped so far from the XVIIth-century level as traditional historiography of a few decades ago had it, money would not have been plentiful. As a matter of fact, the deterioration in trade and shipping did not occur until the latter part of the century. Not only did the absolute volume of trade not decline, but until 1700 it even increased to a level never reached before. It was the place held by Netherland trade and shipping in general European commerce that changed. *Proportionally* Netherland activities lagged behind those of other countries, especially Britain. The policy of economic protection inaugurated by most European States in the second half of the XVIIth century now took effect. Next to Britain, France and Germany were the principal competitors of the Netherlands. These nations enjoyed a great advantage over Holland in that they had a more or less independent industrial production, which the Netherlands never could have. Netherland manufacturing had always been a finishing industry for the products of other countries, such as linen and woollen goods from England and later from Silesia. Once the producers of these goods began to expand their own industrial activities, the position of the Netherlands was greatly weakened. The amount of Netherland capital still exceeded that of the country's industrial competitors, but it was of little use in bolstering industry. The relatively "high" wages paid in Leiden and Haarlem precluded effective competition with the exploitation of human misery in the Oder Valley or the growing industrial cities of England. The condition of labor in Leiden and Haarlem was bad enough, but, as a French visitor noted, even the poorest Dutch worker lived far better than the people of the same class in France. And conditions in France were certainly better than in Silesia and probably better than in England. The shifting of textile manufacturing to the rural districts of Brabant and Overijssel gave Dutch industrialists some respite.

Local conditions there permitted ruthless exploitation. How ruthless is revealed in an official document of 1785, which stated:

"People who know the peasants of Brabant must acknowledge that they are deprived of all the comforts in life that are properly the part of human beings. They drink sour buttermilk or water, they eat potatoes and bread without butter or cheese, they are miserably clothed, they sleep on straw. A prisoner in Holland lives better than a peasant in Brabant."

The industrial decline of Leiden and Haarlem destroyed Holland's economic position in Europe. It deprived the leading provinces of one of the principal elements of well-being. This decline progressed rapidly after 1730. Poor as they were, it reduced the masses of workers in the two towns to still greater poverty, and made them dependent on charity. Many must have left the towns, for contemporary reports tell of houses being torn down and streets and lots being turned into meadows and gardens. We do not know, however, where they went. Not many sailed overseas. Numbers may have gone to the peatmoors of the northeastern provinces, which were just then being rapidly developed and where new villages were formed.

A natural consequence of the industrial development of the larger western European countries was a tendency to establish direct contact with the consumers of their products. So far Netherland merchants had been intermediaries in European trade. Technical difficulties, the small size and slow speed of freighters, imperfect methods of merchandise preservation, lack of capital on the part of the exporters—all these things had made recourse to intermediaries essential. Some of these difficulties were now being overcome. Moreover, Great Britain was even more favorably located than the Netherlands to act as intermediary. Only lack of capital prevented the British from superseding the Netherland trade entirely within a few decades. London easily surpassed Amsterdam as the main shipping center of northern Europe, and even Hamburg fed by a constant stream of merchandise from the interior of Germany rivaled the Dutch commercial capital. The only port in the Netherlands to profit from these new conditions was Rotterdam, favored by its location at the mouth of the Rhine. The production of the Rhineland and Ruhr naturally sought an outlet along the main waterway, and thus Rotterdam was able to gain on Amsterdam.

Amsterdam's economic position would rapidly have become desperate had it not been for the East and West Indian trade which now was of greater *proportional* significance to Netherland economy than it had been, and for Amsterdam's abundant capital supporting its merchants. This

same wealth permitted the East and West India Companies to carry on. The latter, reorganized out of the first West India Company that founded in 1674, was of a strictly limited character. It no longer enjoyed a monopoly of trade on the American Continent, and one of its most important possessions, Surinam, had been transferred to a new enterprise, the shares of which were equally divided between the city of Amsterdam, a prominent oligarch, François van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk, and the Company. Surinam sugar plantations worked with negro slaves brought such huge profits that many XVIIIth century economic experts thought this little district of greater importance to the Netherlands than the whole Dutch Asiatic empire.<sup>47</sup> It is probable that by the middle of the century more than thirty thousand slaves were being used on four hundred plantations, entirely financed by Dutch capital. Between fifty and seventy million guilders were estimated to have been advanced to the planters against mortgages on their estates.

The claim that Surinam was more important to the Netherlands than the Asiatic empire is untenable. It is true that the East India Company was passing through a critical period, that the reserve of more than twenty million guilders built up in Batavia was rapidly dwindling and that the Company had to borrow money from Amsterdam banks to carry on its trade. The exhaustion of the Batavian reserve was due to protracted warfare resulting from the East Indian Government's intervention in the disputes of the princes of Mataram, Java's principal sultanate. By these wars the Company obtained sovereign rights over the northern coastlands of the island, but little economic advantage. Rather indiscreetly the Directors in Amsterdam continued to pay large dividends to avoid a drop of the Company's shares on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, but it became increasingly difficult to know whether these dividends were paid out of real profits from the East Indies or out of money borrowed in Holland. By 1779 the directors had burdened their enterprise with a debt of eighty-five million guilders nearly all incurred in the XVIIIth century. This debt and the loss of the Batavian reserves exceeded the total sum paid in dividends during the XVIIIth century, and there was some truth in the criticism of contemporary experts who asserted that the prosperity of the Company was merely apparent. Many proposals for reform were made and some even reached the stage of timid initial application. There were experts in the Indies who understood how wrong the whole system was. The officials were underpaid and thus obliged to resort to illicit trading; the limitation of production to keep prices at ever higher levels aroused the hatred of the natives. The organization needed reorganization from the bottom up. But the directors stood by their principles. Vain efforts were made to stop il-

licit trading, which reached fantastic proportions. Ships are said to have foundered from the enormous weight of "packages and presents" carried surreptitiously for "relatives" at home. The directors resorted to drastic penalties and once, in 1721, to mass execution in Batavia. It was without avail. Their policy only created general unrest in Batavia, which led to the awful massacres of 1740, when Dutch and Indonesians attacked the Chinese inhabitants of the city and murdered thousands of them in an outburst of uncontrolled fury.

Although recognized by all as evil and attacked both in the Netherlands and in Batavia, the system survived because it served the private interests of the ruling clique in Amsterdam. Manipulating the Company's shares on the Stock Exchange and borrowing from the province of Holland, so that the debts of the Company were transferred to the taxpayers, provided wonderful profits which the directors and their caste were loathe to forego. The East India trade might have flourished, but it was deliberately kept at the prescribed level.

While industry declined, while trade and shipping remained stationary, Holland became increasingly important as the money market of Europe. The bankers of Amsterdam played a primordial role in the maintenance of Netherlands commerce; their financial resources and wide connections were indispensable to foreign merchants shipping goods abroad, who could rely on having their drafts paid promptly in Amsterdam. Until 1763, all settlements between London and Russia were made in Amsterdam. For decades Amsterdam was the clearing house of all Europe. This gradually reduced the Amsterdam merchants to the position of commission agents, but it took half a century and more for the change to be completed. Amsterdam was also an excellent source of funds for governments and in the long run foreign loans proved attractive and profitable. British bonds were preferred. Britain's expenditures for her armies on the Continent during the Seven Years' War were largely met by loans from Amsterdam bankers. A recent study estimates that the Dutch held a large share of the British public debt around 1760. At that time the debt was nearly 150,000,000 pounds, and the Dutch share so large that British experts feared a catastrophe if their foreign support failed. We may assume that perhaps a billion guilders were invested by Dutch capitalists in British funds alone. To these investments must be added loans floated by France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia in the Amsterdam market.

Thus the significance of the Amsterdam market in international politics becomes clear. Changed economic conditions undoubtedly influenced Netherlands foreign policy. XVIIth century shipping and colonization could be protected by ships and soldiers, but XVIIIth century investments

could not. Neutrality was the international policy most favorable to Amsterdam's bankers. "Standing quietly in the midst of turbulent waters" gave these gentlemen excellent opportunities. The problems of war and peace, however, were not going to be settled in accordance with the wishes of financial circles; worse, they were not going to be settled in accordance with the needs of national safety and independence.

In the XVIIth century internal political conflicts centered around strong personalities, Oldenbarnevelt and Prince Maurice, John De Witt and William III. Hence the strong personal note in these conflicts and the tragic ends of the defeated. Constitutional problems underlay those conflicts, but personalities overshadowed political issues. In one century the Republic changed twice from oligarchic to semi-monarchical rule, without altering the constitution. However keen the rivalry between the leaders, however great the differences of opinion, the interest of the state predominated. Oldenbarnevelt, supported by France in his conflict with Maurice, never thought of checking his adversary by subordinating national policy to that of France. John De Witt acquiesced in an agreement with Cromwell that aimed at eliminating the prince of Orange from public influence, but he did not seek peace with Cromwell to strengthen his own political position but only because peace was so badly needed by the nation. He never dreamed of subordinating his foreign policy to the requirements of party politics in 1672, and his opponent, Prince William, who was offered monarchical authority over the Netherlands by the enemies of the nation, spurned this offer to continue De Witt's policy of last ditch defense.

All this was changed in the XVIIIth century. The economic interest of the nation demanded neutrality. The political commitments of the state and its interest in the fate of Belgium demanded at least some participation in international affairs. This necessarily meant defending the Dutch military positions in Belgium and siding with Britain against France. It also meant reinforcing the army and navy and placing them under unified command. But this was directly opposed to the private interests of the leading oligarchs, for it would have forced them to share their power with the prince of Orange. It was also opposed to their sentiments and intellectual leanings, which were definitely for France rather than England. Foreign policy was subordinated to party interest, a very dangerous attitude in a small country surrounded by great powers. Nothing contributed more to the rapid decline of the Netherland Republic in the second half of the XVIIIth century than this complete predominance of party over national interests. While "neutrals" and "Orangists" bitterly contested the issues of foreign policy, while French troops overran the Belgian provinces and invaded Dutch Brabant, the middleclass people of the Netherlands, determined to get at

the root of the evil, made their first assault on the prerogatives of the oligarchy and on the traditional form of government.

In 1747, a revolt caused by the military catastrophe at the hands of France forced the oligarchs after some resistance to appoint William IV of Nassau-Orange to be stadhouder and commander-in-chief of the army and navy.<sup>48</sup> The Frisian branch of the House of Nassau thus succeeded to the position of the Holland branch. For the first time all the provinces were united under *one* stadhouder, an important progress in the unification of the Republic and also in the growth of monarchical institutions. The office of stadhouder was again proclaimed hereditary, this time in the male or female line. This also applied to the command of the armed forces. A great innovation was the appointment of the new stadhouder as Chief Director of the East and West India Companies. For the first time in history a prince of Orange gained influence in the Dutch overseas territories, and this was considered as only the beginning of a complete reorganization of the administration.

The "burghers," traders, shopkeepers, and artisans of the city, were in feverish agitation. The city guards held political meetings where programs of reform were drafted. The people of Friesland and Groningen, mindful of ancient liberties and democratic forms of government, sought their restoration; and the townspeople of Holland and Utrecht followed with violent demands that the influence of the guilds or city guards in local administration be restored, or at least a council created among the elected officers of the guards to express the wishes of the people and control the "maintenance of the privileges"—that is, check arbitrary and financial exploitation by the oligarchy. These people looked to the prince of Orange to carry out their political wishes more or less according to law. The agitators all belonged to the middleclass and had enough to lose to make them shun violence. The masses of the wage-earners were not asked to share in this bourgeois revolution.

The result was a tragic failure. The prince of Orange, intelligent but weak and strictly traditional in his views, was the worst possible revolutionary leader. After weeks of oratory and vituperation, excited meetings and agitation in the streets, the unrest evaporated after Prince William, offering many embarrassed excuses to the ruling oligarchy, had changed the membership of the City Council of Amsterdam, "I am sorry," he said to one of the burgomasters, "that I must ask you to leave, but I cannot help it." To which the burgomaster replied, "I know it, Your Highness. I myself am convinced that you must discharge me." In this apologetic way "reform" was accomplished and revolution frustrated. The fact that the townspeople permitted this lends a tragic-comic note to the whole episode, which has done more to make Netherlanders ashamed of their

XVIIIth century history than the loss of foreign prestige and of trade.

The saddest aspect of it all was the fact that all parties believed reform necessary—except perhaps the prince of Orange who believed in the magic power of his name—but none wanted reform by any of the others. As early as 1717 the oligarchy had contemplated a modification of the governmental system. Simon van Slingelandt, secretary of the Council of State, put forward a plan for the reorganization of that antiquated body to make it again a central executive authority. The report of the able and learned gentleman was read and filed. That was all. A partial readjustment of customs duties was the only reform achieved before the revolutionary convulsions of 1747. The stadhouder worked feverishly at numerous plans but completed none. His irresolute nature and distrust of stronger characters whose predominance he feared, prevented him from accomplishing any reforms in the few years of his great power. A second plan for the formation of a central executive in the form of "departments" to be organized for the various branches of administration, each under its own director, was rejected.

The stadhouder died in 1751, and his offices, now hereditary, fell to his son under the regency of the princes of Orange. For the first time the functions of stadhouder were exercised by a woman, a British princess of the House of Hannover, daughter of King George II. Against her weak authority the oligarchy rapidly reasserted its influence. In spite of the personal ties between the Court of St. James and that of The Hague, the Netherland Republic remained neutral in the Seven Years' War, when France and Austria fought Britain and Prussia for the mastery of America and India and northern Germany. France and Austria being allies, Belgium for once escaped being the general battlefield. With Belgium secure, the Netherlands looked passively on while the future of Europe, America and India was being determined in seven bloody years of war. This time, the passivity of the Republic was complete. It made no serious attempt to protect its shipping from unprecedented British interference, and did not even dare to refuse passage to French troops.

This attitude had an immediate and serious result in Asia, where the Dutch Company's fleets had ruled the Indian Ocean throughout the XVIIth century. When rumors of Holland's total collapse had spread in 1672 to the ends of the Asiatic world, Batavia had stood like a rock. British squadrons were driven from the Indian seas. If the defense of the homeland failed, it was said, scores of thousands of Hollanders would come to Java and the Moluccas to build a new Netherland. In the Seven Years' War, the Company hardly dared to move while the French and British were fighting for India. Dutch outposts in Bengal were overrun, a relief

expedition from Batavia was attacked by British ships and troops on the Ganges and utterly defeated. The Anglo-Dutch alliance in Europe no more prevented the British from overrunning the Dutch sphere of influence than a similar alliance a century and a half before had hindered the Dutch from driving the British from the Malay archipelago.

The Republic had not the strength to resist these foreign incursions, and the States General could not agree to reinforce either the army or the navy. Rather than give preference to the army or the navy, opposing factions in the States General allowed both branches of the service to deteriorate. Rather than strengthen the national treasury, the bankers and merchants of Amsterdam invested hundreds of millions in British, Prussian, and French bonds. The Hague became the center of intrigue in Europe. The princely court was accused of working for British interests, but the charge was brought by those who themselves neglected national interests in the hope of obtaining commercial privileges from the king of France. In one respect the Amsterdam merchants were right. Passive neutrality brought the Netherlands enormous profits, as Amsterdam became more than ever the clearing house of Europe. The prestige of the oligarchy grew; that of the House of Orange declined after the death of the princess regent. The States took the unusual step of assuming the regency themselves until 1766, when young William, fifteen years old, was supposed to be able to exercise his functions, which were as important as ever. Having tasted power again, it was unthinkable that the oligarchy would submit to the will of a child or his favorite advisors. The result was polite cooperation; each party refrained from pressing issues disagreeable to the other. The defense of the Republic, a sad but dire necessity in the late XVIIIth century, when the whim of an absolute monarch or the fretful vapors of a mistress could cause an international catastrophe, were neglected to obviate irksome dissent.

The crisis came in 1776, when Britain was faced with the American Revolution and saw her old enemies rally to seek revenge for earlier defeats. The Netherland Republic suddenly found herself in a most favorable position. The British, anxious to keep the Netherlands neutral even if they did not obtain their help to which they were entitled by treaty, offered to make great concessions to Dutch trade in the Caribbean, which meant allowing the Dutch West Indies to become the headquarters of the most profitable smuggling that could be imagined. The island of St. Eustachius was the main base for blockade runners carrying arms and ammunition to the American revolutionary armies. A working agreement with Britain was easily reached, but it called for a firm attitude towards France, which also wanted the cooperation of the Netherlands. The French hoped to use



the Dutch possessions in India and Ceylon as bases for the reconquest of their power in India. Sad to say, the Americans and their fight for freedom never figured in the political combinations of the Netherland leaders.

Prince William V, closely related to the British Royal family and highly conservative, had no sympathy for the Americans and regarded them as "rebels." The Orangist leaders shared his views completely. The anti-Orangist oligarchs were no better informed on the real significance of what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic. Many of them had read the rationalist philosophers of the late XVIIth and the XVIIIth centuries: Locke, Hume, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau. Countless editions of these works had been published in the Netherlands to avoid French censorship, but the majority of the ruling class objected to the new ideas and granted a request of the Reformed Church that Rousseau's *Contrat Social* and Voltaire's *Essai sur la Tolérance* be banned by the States Assembly.

The American struggle against British rule that preceded the Declaration of Independence, had entirely escaped the attention of the Dutch public. Of the many political pamphlets then published in Holland, not one dealt with American problems. The Netherlanders of 1770 looked upon the Corsicans and later upon the Poles as epic fighters for freedom. America was just too far away. The suppression of the Order of the Jesuits interested the sons of the *Gueus* more than the coming war of liberation in the West. Indeed, these Netherlanders looked towards the past, without much attention to what the future might bring. After the American war had broken out, British propaganda flooded the Netherlands with anti-American literature. The British Parliamentary opposition also saw to it that their point of view was put before the Dutch. French pamphlets were read more generally, because the leading class were familiar with the language. Some time passed, however, before a single American publication was translated into Dutch.<sup>49</sup>

The principles of the American Revolution were of no interest to the leading classes of the Netherlands. The economic opportunity offered by the breaking of Britain's trade monopoly in the Atlantic colonies was a different matter, worthy of more attention. Amsterdam merchants were most anxious to be the first to reap the fruits of Britain's loss. Moreover, was not this war, in which Britain surrounded on all sides by enemies seemed about to succumb, a miraculous opportunity to restore the balance of power in the North Sea and to regain Holland's ancient supremacy? John Adams, who came to the Netherlands in 1780, rightly saw that anti-British sentiment was at the bottom of the pro-American attitude of the Dutch. He found little real interest in his country. It was the large and enormously profitable business done at St. Eustachius that caused the com-

mander of that Dutch port to fire a salute to the American flag on November 16, 1776, the first foreign authority to do so. There were a few exceptions to the attitude of the ruling class. Out of sympathy for the ideals of the Revolution, Johan Van der Capellen sought contact with Benjamin Franklin, and propagated American views among his countrymen. With the progress of time and of political unrest in the Netherlands, with the growing success of the Revolution, more fervent admirers of the new freedom rose to preach American doctrine to the people of the Republic. Peter van der Kemp, a former Mennonite minister, was one of them. But France, Britain and the American Revolution were all less important to the narrow minds of nearly all Dutch politicians than their own petty party quarrels.

The Republic faced a grave crisis. The States General had to decide whether to follow a passive policy towards Britain's efforts to supervise all neutral trade and search all neutral ships. If not, they must prepare for naval war, seriously and immediately. If they chose to recognize the right of search, they must reinforce the army to prevent a possible French attack. On the one hand they would lose the enormous profits from their smuggling trade in the Caribbean. On the other they would hardly be able to supply the Americans with arms and gun powder to be used against their British ally. It was an awkward choice. A gentlemen's agreement with Britain might offer a way out, but in that case what chance would Amsterdam have for American business after Britain's expected defeat? However these considerations weighed less than the fear that alliance with Britain and reinforcement of the army might increase the stadhouder's prestige, or that opposition to Britain would be an unkind act towards the stadhouder's relatives. Neither John De Witt nor William III had ever known such scruples.

The stadhouder was willing to compromise so as to safeguard Netherland commercial interests without involving the nation in a war with Britain. He might have saved the situation if his political opponents had been willing to be saved by him, but that was the last thing they wanted. Not content with sacrificing some of the commercial advantages of neutrality to secure others, they wanted everything; above all they wanted others to fight their war, if war should come. To be sure, preparations were made to reinforce the navy, plans were agreed to for the construction of new ships. But every member of the government knew or should have known, that those ships could not be ready in a few months; that the wharves and ports were inadequate to accommodate large ships; that the new vessels would be too small to engage the British; that against one hundred twenty-two British ships of the line the whole existing Dutch navy

numbered no more than eleven, most of which were not in a condition to put to sea. The greed and resentment of the anti-Orangists prepared the ground for French intrigues, which were masterfully conducted by King Louis's diplomats. A promise that the inhabitants of towns supporting an anti-British policy would be favored by French custom-officers created a pro-French landslide in the States of Holland. By accepting this bribe, Holland's towns virtually destroyed the political individuality of their province, not to speak of violating the spirit and letter of the Union of Utrecht which demanded a common front towards the outside world. The Republic did not go to war against Britain; she stumbled into a war the significance of which her leaders failed to see.<sup>50</sup>

The anti-Orangist oligarchy that dragged the nation into war, caused the ruin of the once flourishing Netherland Republic. Dutch shipping, already lagging far behind its British competitors, received a death blow. Only once did a Dutch squadron put to sea to escort merchantmen, but before the convoy had gone far it was forced back after a violent engagement, in which the Dutch men-of-war acquitted themselves honorably. But the losses in ships, merchandise and money were not the worst. Even the plundering and total destruction of St. Eustachius, the smuggling center in the Caribbean, by Admiral George B. Rodney was only a minor accident in the general disaster. To this day the ruins on the small West Indian island testify to the savagery with which the famous British commander wreaked his vengeance; indeed, the Opposition in the House of Commons took Rodney severely to task for his wanton devastation.

Far worse was the fact that the Republic at home and abroad fell into a state of complete vassalage to France. Only the timely arrival of a French fleet saved the Dutch colony at the Cape from being conquered by the British. The same fleet also saved most of Ceylon. Another French fleet reconquered the Dutch settlements in the West Indies already occupied by British troops. From the Gulf of Mexico to Ceylon, French garrisons guarded Dutch possessions, as so many pledges that the ruined Republic would not desert the French cause. In Europe the southern frontier of the Netherland state was deprived of the traditional protection it had enjoyed by the occupation of Belgian fortresses and a general supervision of Belgian affairs. Joseph II of Austria undertook to free his Belgian territory from all outside interference. He brutally ordered the Dutch troops to withdraw and no opposition was possible to his demands. France was unwilling to risk war in Europe for the sake of her newest dependent and offered no assistance. The prince of Orange, who had married Wilhelmina of Prussia, a Hohenzollern princess, in 1767 vainly appealed to his uncle, King Frederick II, as if that shrewd cynical old politician would ever have modified

his foreign policy for the sake of a niece's husband. Fearing a renewal of the Seven Years' War and that Prussia might once more be attacked by a ring of enemies, he wanted the king of France as his friend, and advised his nephew to shape his foreign policy to that of France.

Each month that the war lasted, the situation of the Netherlands grew worse. The directors of the East India Company who for a century had deliberately maintained an antiquated system of trade because of its advantage to themselves, saw the collapse of the financial house of cards that had given their enterprise a false appearance of prosperity. Without a cent in their treasury and without a pound of coffee or spice in their warehouses, they were unable to meet their payments. While the Company in the Netherlands had to ask for a moratorium, the storehouses of Batavia were packed with many million guilders worth of coffee. Even then the directors refused to allow Batavia to sell direct to neutral traders.

At this propitious moment the oligarchic clique attacked the prince of Orange, blaming all this misery on his neglect of national interests. The prince had it in his power to save the Republic, if the ruling clique had been willing to cooperate with him. Britain, by no means bent on fighting the war to a finish, had offered complete restoration of Netherland rights and territories. But the oligarchs, allied with France for better or for worse, convinced that a separate peace with Britain would cause an Orangist landslide, preferred to let the nation suffer rather than lose the opportunity to accuse the prince of every political crime short of high treason. The only meritorious act in this mistaken policy—the recognition of the United States as a sovereign state in April, 1782, the second European recognition of American independence—was spoiled by the reluctance of Amsterdam bankers to provide the new state with substantial loans. The outcome was that the Republic let pass the opportune moment for making peace and then, abandoned by all its allies, had to cede Negapatnam, its most important fortress on the coast of India, and throw the Molucca seas open to British shipping. A first breach had been made in the East India's Company's monopoly in southeastern Asia. Soon after a British settlement was founded at Penang on the coast of Malaya, an event which marked the beginning of British occupation of that area.

After the war, trade and shipping partially revived. The East India Company did not. In the fifteen years between 1780 and 1795 its debts rose to 127,000,000 guilders, fifty percent more than all the debts incurred in the one hundred and sixty years preceding the catastrophe of 1780. The West India Company had been moribund for decades and could not possibly recover. By the irony of history, in this last hour of the Republic's existence as a result of measures taken during the war, the Dutch navy regained

some efficiency, and at the moment of national collapse this branch of the armed services was in better shape than it had been for three-quarters of a century. The Republic's political prestige was lost forever. What remained of it after the war was destroyed by squabbling political factions in the next three years.

Three men now dominated the old oligarchy—the pensionaries of Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Dordrecht. This triumvirate subordinated all its political actions to the elimination of the stadhouder's influence. They knew that France would never trust Prince William because of his English family ties, so the foreign policy of the Republic was to be strongly pro-French, because French influence would back the oligarchy against the Orangists. No price was too high to pay. France herself in utmost distress and within only a few years of the revolution, still dreamed of further crippling Britain's sea power. Having lost her colonies, France hoped the Dutch possessions would provide substitute bases for the next war. French officers would be sent out to reorganize the Dutch East Indian army in Java; plans drafted for a joint attack on the British positions in India, and so forth. That such plans could but endanger the Netherland colonies and make the Republic a shield for France—a shield on which all British blows would fall—did not bother the triumvirate. The scheme which involved the reorganization of the Dutch army by French officers, was obnoxious to the prince of Orange; that was enough to recommend it.

Poor William V was more hated, more bitterly denounced as "tyrant" and "oppressor" than any Netherland leader since the days of Alva. Not overintelligent, physically sluggish, suspicious and stubborn, with a love of minute detail, irresolute of character, he was the least tyrannical of tyrants. Convinced of the importance of his family in Netherland history, he found no better retort to the insults of the triumvirate than a threat to leave the Republic and withdraw to his possessions in Nassau on the middle-Rhine, as if this were the greatest punishment he could inflict on his opponents. By her energy and persuasion, Princess Wilhelmina prevented this, but he did leave the province of Holland, where he was exposed to the daily pin pricks of the three pensionaries and their clique. Unlike his predecessors, the prince of Orange could not count on popular support in his conflict with the oligarchy. The middleclass still resented the desertion of William's father in 1747, when the first revolutionary attack was made on the power of the oligarchy. After 1747, under the influence of French and British political philosophers, a timid trend towards democracy had developed among the burghers. It grew after the Anglo-Dutch war and under the influence of American independence. A flood of political pamphlets, newspapers, and books spread the new ideas among the middle

classes. The principle of popular sovereignty was understood by the Netherlanders, who had advocated it in slightly different form in their struggle against the king of Spain.

The triumvirate gladly took advantage of popular enthusiasm against the "tyrant." But the masses were not satisfied with attacks on the stadhouder; they found the oligarchy equally obnoxious. The "usurpation" of civic liberties by the oligarchs was violently denounced and the restoration of freedom demanded. The guilds and the city-guards were to regain the political influence they were supposed to have exercised in medieval times. The democrats founded clubs, societies and free corps which boisterously took to military training. For a time it seemed that thousands of volunteers all over the country might rise in armed revolt to expel their political opponents from the country. The free corps and clubs formed national unions and held national congresses. Such things were unheard of in the traditional provincialism of the Republic. Be that as it may, the movement lacked leadership and conviction. It was not a movement of the masses but of the middleclass. The have-nots were carefully excluded from the "democratic" organizations. All the members of the clubs and free corps were willing to do was join in armed demonstrations and overthrow a local government. Violence was discussed, but hardly ever resorted to. However well it sounded to proclaim one's willingness to die for the ideal of popular government, it was an entirely different matter to do so, leaving wife, children, and business behind on this earth. The Dutch middleclass was definitely dissatisfied and wanted a change. It was neither desperate nor destitute, a fact which prevented the patriot free corps from becoming the predecessors of the French Jacobins.

Both the oligarchs and the democrats called themselves "Patriots." An Orangist party did not exist, but it could be created. The material was at hand in the masses left out of political consideration by the "Patriots"; in those members of the oligarchy connected with the Orangist movement by tradition or who recognized that a thorough reform could only be achieved by the evolution of the Republic into a constitutional monarchy; in officers and men of the army and navy, who always favored the prince as their commander-in-chief. The Orangist party was organized by the British ambassador at The Hague. Here too, foreign intervention was decisive; the new movement was set up to counteract French political influence in the Netherlands. If the Orangists gained the upper hand, the Republic would switch its allegiance from France to Britain.

The stadhouder obtained additional support from the oligarchs of certain provinces who dreaded the effects of the democratic movement. The States of Guelderland instructed him to suppress revolutionary agitation

in their province and, whenever William was ordered to act, he acted promptly. His troops occupied Guelderland and part of Utrecht. Thereupon the States of Holland recalled the troops paid by them from the army of the Union and deployed those troops with armed volunteers along the eastern boundary of the province. Civil war seemed near but did not occur. The States of Holland did not want to attack and the stadhouder did not move unless asked to do so. Thus, the Netherlands lost their last chance to settle their political differences among themselves. The fate of the "Patriots" was sealed. In France the political convulsions preceding the revolution had begun. In Prussia, the old king Frederick II had died and was succeeded by the brother of the princess of Orange, Frederick William II. Britain's prestige was growing, and the Orangist masses in Holland grew more clamorous every week. The opportunity to accomplish a democratic reform of the Netherlands from within had passed. The forces of reaction were too strong. Not they however, but a Prussian military expedition restored the authority of the House of Orange.

An insignificant incident, the refusal of the States to permit Princess Wilhelmina to enter Holland, resulted in a Prussian demand for reparation of the "insult" to His Majesty the King of Prussia—because an armed "Patriot," sword in hand, had guarded His Majesty's sister before she recrossed the boundary of the province. Reparation was refused, of course, for the princess had not been insulted and the matter was purely an internal one. But King Frederick William was not to be denied and assured of British approval and French impotence, he ordered his troops to invade the Republic. The Netherland army under the prince of Orange cooperated with the invaders; the Patriot defenses crumbled without a blow. Amsterdam alone was too proud to surrender without resistance, and some fighting took place on the approaches to the inundation by which the city protected itself. Threatened by an Orangist revolt, the defenders capitulated.

The prince of Orange was restored to all his functions. The Prussians left, but not until they had presented a bill for their expenditures, which at the energetic and indignant protest of Princess Wilhelmina, was reduced to the singular amount of 402,018 guilders and 10 pennies. The States of Holland added a tip of twenty percent, and made it half a million. A storm of Orangist enthusiasm swept over the country, but now reduced to complete vassalage. It could not avoid concluding a strict alliance with both Prussia and Britain. Thousands of Patriots went into exile in France. There, in poverty and amid the turmoil of revolution, they shook off the inhibitions that had made their democratic movement of the eighties a farce. The change came too late. The revolution in the Netherlands was to be made, not by reformed "Patriots" but by the armies of the French republic.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Second Netherland State

THE thirty years following the revolution of 1789 are in many respects the darkest in Netherland history. In those three decades the old republican state, the pride of Oldenbarnevelt and John De Witt, was torn down. Meanwhile, as a small group of former "Patriots" experimented with new political institutions, the Netherlands lost more of their freedom and independence year by year, until the country as a political entity was utterly destroyed. From the depths of that humiliation the nation rose again to build a second Netherland state. The vicissitudes of Netherland political life in the years of "Restoration" (1787-1795), of destruction and experimentation (1795-1800), are of very little interest. Action always lagged far behind the roar of oratorical protest. The absurd contrast between the energy spent in words and that spent in deeds was so great that often, as in 1747 and 1787, the effect is tragi-comical.

In 1787, the stadhouder, William V, was restored to the full exercise of his functions. A few half-hearted attempts at reform in Europe and the Asiatic empire remained without effect. The historical studies of Adriaan Kluit, a professor of Leiden University, were the most remarkable product of this counter-revolutionary trend. For more than one hundred and fifty years official historians had presented the oligarchic point of view and defended the sovereignty of the States Assemblies with arguments from Tacitus, which were supposed to show that sovereignty in the Low Countries had always belonged to the leading classes. The democratic patriots advocated the theory that sovereignty rested originally with the people and had been usurped by the oligarchy. Against both opinions Kluit formulated his theory of monarchy as the source of all authority. To prove his point, he made a thorough study of medieval Dutch history, the first historian in the Netherlands to do so. His well documented works remained the basis of all later research on the early periods of Holland's history. His theory on sovereignty was taken up and put to political use in the XIXth century.

Two years after the restoration of the stadhouder, revolution broke out in France. In 1793, Britain became involved in the Franco-Austrian war and the Dutch Republic obediently followed her powerful ally. French



revolutionary armies conquered Belgium. With them was a "Batave legion" of Dutch "Patriot" exiles organized for the liberation of their native land. The French, under Dumouriez, penetrated into North Brabant but then withdrew to be defeated by the Austrians and driven from Belgian soil. Again the danger had passed. The ruling Orangist party was given a few years respite, but it had become evident that the Republic could not defend herself effectively. The motley German mercenary regiments hired after the catastrophe of 1787 from the princes of Ansbach and similar purveyors of "war equipment" were not dependable. The "Patriots," who for six years had lived in prudent political retirement, regained courage and under the cover of literary clubs reorganized their party. The swift advance of General Jourdan's army in 1794 brought French troops back into Brabant and, in the first days of 1795, a division under General Pichegru crossed the frozen rivers and invaded the heart of Holland. The poorly disciplined Dutch army disintegrated. Herman Daendels, once a lawyer and a bellicose Patriot leader in the tiny town of Hattem in Guelderland, who, in exile, had become a high ranking officer in the French army, rode on ahead of the invading troops to arrange a "revolution" and a voluntary reversal in Dutch politics before the French could occupy the Netherlands and proclaim it conquered land.

The revolution that followed was a "velvet" revolution, as some fanatics returned from exile complained. It developed without any untoward incidents. In Amsterdam a "Revolutionary Committee" under Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, a lawyer, went to Town Hall and politely replaced the oligarchic city government, calling itself the "Provisional Representatives of the People." Its example was followed all over the Netherlands. The prince of Orange, discouraged and powerless, decided to leave for England with his family. In Zeeland, where French troops could not so easily penetrate, the ruling class proved most accommodating. They resigned in a body and then resumed their seats, no longer as the States of Zeeland ruling by sacred traditions, but as the "Provisional Representatives of the People of Zeeland." The revolution was an accomplished fact.

There is an outward similarity between these events and those of 1940. In reality there is a basic difference. In 1940, the government itself left the national territory in Europe to continue the struggle against the invaders. In the occupied Netherlands no government remained; only an administration. In 1795, whatever the extent of his power, the prince of Orange, as stadhouder, was *not* the head of the government, let alone the sovereign of the state. He took refuge abroad where he sought to organize an Orangist-Netherland movement. The *Sovereigns*, the States of the prov-

inces, submitted to foreign occupation, but the ruling oligarchy consented almost without protest to make place for new persons who reorganized the state. There was no doubt about the legality of the new government. Whatever may have been the sentiments of the masses who remained largely apathetic, the majority of the intellectuals backed the revolution. It was also supported by most dissenters, especially by the Catholics, who expected now to obtain equality of civic and religious rights.

In England, the stadhouder organized an anti-revolutionary movement and, as Chief Director of the East and West India Companies, sent a circular letter to all Dutch commanders overseas, ordering them to admit British troops to the territories and positions under their control. These British troops were to occupy the Dutch colonies for the duration of the war under an agreement between the British and Netherland states—the latter represented by the prince—guaranteeing restitution after the war. Under this agreement a number of Dutch ports in the West Indies were surrendered to the British. In the East Indies only the fortresses on the southern coast of India, on Sumatra, and in Malaya obeyed the stadhouder's orders. All other colonial administrations, including the government of Batavia, decided to recognize the government in The Hague, despite the fact that their sympathies were not with the revolution.

The British brought legal uncertainty to an end by formally declaring war on the new Dutch Republic (September 15, 1795). A declaration of war necessarily implies recognition of the enemy as a sovereign state. Prussia, in concluding a peace treaty with France at Basle on March 5, 1795, had already deserted her Orangist ally. These facts again throw into strong relief the difference between 1795 and 1940. The Netherland government of 1795 could not face the crisis of foreign invasion with the same determination as that of 1940. Patriotism had suffered from decades of internal confusion in which the aid of foreign powers had been shamelessly accepted for particular political aims.

The "Patriots" of 1787 again ruled the Netherlands. Their ideals of eight years before (such as restoring the guilds and city guards to political influence), now seemed to them memories of a distant past, no more related to their present condition than beliefs of the stone age. They ridiculed the ancient federal republic with its multifarious institutions, its complicated machinery, its cherished charter freedoms. As the source of freedom, the parchment and ink of royal decrees were replaced by theories taken from Rousseau and the orators of the French revolution. The French Republic "One and Indivisible" was the model upon which the institutions of the Seven Provinces were to be formed. To tear down the old structure was easy. The Union of Utrecht was buried in the archives. The nobility were

refused access to the States Assemblies; the office of stadhouder and grand pensionary were abolished as were the privileges of the former oligarchy; the East and West India Companies were liquidated and their possessions and debts transferred to the state; a war of extermination was waged against all heraldic emblems, liveries, titles, and whatever else was reminiscent of former class distinctions. More constructive was the admittance of the provinces of Drente and the oppressed people of Brabant to the States General for the first time.

The work of destruction cleared the way for radical reforms. The autonomy of towns and rural districts was erased by a stroke of the pen. The provinces were no longer sovereign; in future the minority in the States General was to submit to the majority. Reconstruction was easy so long as it meant only the pasting of new labels on old forms. The Rights of Man and of the Citizen were solemnly proclaimed; towns and rural districts were re-named; the slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" was printed and painted on all posters; finally the name of the state was changed to the "Batave Republic." Civilis and his warriors, so long the patron saints of the oligarchy, were appropriated by the new democracy. Few people suffered personally from the revolution. Some were arrested or exiled, among the latter William Bilderdijk, the only outstanding personality of the time in Dutch literature.

These innovations were dearly bought. France had helped the Patriots to victory but not out of pure brotherly love. She sought payment in money, territory and political privileges. Maastricht and Zeeland-Flanders were lost, French garrisons placed in the principal Netherland fortresses, and a huge war contribution was levied on the liberated Dutch sister republic. This did more than anything else to revive anti-French sentiment.

A National Convention elected by the people, Jews and Orangists accepted, toiled for years to frame a constitution. The discussions grew interminable, the stream of oratory flowed unchecked, and with factions evenly balanced, the Convention might have sat until Doomsday, writing a Constitution in many volumes—indeed their final draft was known as the "big book"—if French bayonets had not abruptly put an end to it. The leaders of the Federalist opposition were arrested, the French Constitution of 1795 was translated into Dutch and promulgated in a locally adapted version, and the Batave Republic was blessed with a new political organization. A second display of French military prowess enforced its adoption; a third, three years later (1801) abolished it in favor of an organization more congenial to the new French ruler, Napoleon Bonaparte. The dictator was dissatisfied, however, with the accomplishments of his new regime and by his orders, Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, former lawyer and revolution-

ary leader, found himself invested with full power, the title of grand pensionary, a military escort, and a suite of liveried footmen.<sup>51</sup>

His task was not to rule the Netherlands in their own interest as he had hoped to do, but to pave the way for a "king of Holland" in the person of Napoleon's brother, Louis Bonaparte. "The Netherlands" was now "Holland," a development that could have been foreseen for two centuries; but the House of Orange was replaced by a vainglorious if good-natured Corsican. The climate of the Netherlands did not suit him, and his rheumatism drove him from one residence to another in a futile attempt to escape the country's humidity and chilliness. The new monarch appointed numerous marshals and high ranking officials, adorned the breasts of his favorite officers with magnificent decorations, and created a new Dutch nobility from the descendants of the pre-republican aristocracy and the ranks of the former city oligarchy. Former "Patriots," who had once foamed against "tyranny and aristocracy," had no objection to being incorporated into this new nobility, created for the glory of a Corsican intruder. Even Bilderdijk, the defiant exile of 1795, returned to teach King Louis Dutch and become his court poet. Louis, intelligent but powerless against his brother the emperor, succeeded in gaining some popularity among his subjects by a display of sympathy with the needs of the Netherlanders and by an idle pretense of political independence. Netherlanders must not forget, however, that all the difficulties this king-by-the-grace-of-his-brother encountered in the four years of his reign sprang from his sincere desire to be more Dutch than French. For this reason the emperor dismissed him from his royal office as unceremoniously as he would have thrown out a valet, and incorporated the luckless Netherlands into the French state. The work of destruction begun by the revolutionists of 1795 had reached unexpected completion.

The political evolution was too rapid for people to adapt themselves to the successive changes. General political apathy overcame the masses. Resistance was limited to putting off as long as possible all changes or reforms, good or bad, demanded by the French dictator. Napoleon raged that "a people who refused to create an army had no right to independence," but he forgot that the Netherlands' will to independence would not have found adequate expression in the creation of an auxiliary corps for the emperor's bloody campaigns. He scolded Holland, calling her "an English province" because she refused to commit economic suicide by sacrificing all her foreign trade for the benefit of France. The Dutch had sold their colonies to Britain, he said, but what difference was there whether the Dutch flag was replaced by the tricolor or the Union Jack?

For generations every child in every Dutch school learned of the "French

period" as one of degradation and inactivity, marking the lowest political ebb in Netherland national history. The unfortunate coincidence that with very few exceptions Netherland poets of the time produced merely bombastic rhetoric while claiming to excel Hooft and Vondel, has irritated posterity even more. Schimmelpenninck, whose rapid evolution from patriot-revolutionary to "Count of the Empire" rightly shocked the solid Dutch shopkeepers, and Herman Willem Daendels, who rose from small-town lawyer to "Marshal of the Empire" and reformer of the East Indian administration, caught the fancy of the next generation far less than the dramatic figure of the Corsican conqueror. Yet, the "French period" was something more in Netherland history than the lowest point of national life. In the fifteen years between 1795 and 1810 a new Netherland state was created and the foundations laid for some national institutions of which Dutch people are proud today.

The revolution destroyed provincialism and broke down the barriers that held the people of the small Netherland country apart in nine different local groups, each with its own local chauvinism that obscured broader national views. For centuries the people of Guelderland, of Zeeland, of Holland had clung stubbornly to provincial independence. In 1797, after three years' discussion in which the "Federalists," who presumably represented the majority of the Netherland people, put up a strong though losing fight, provincial autonomy had disappeared. For a while the provinces ceased even to exist, being replaced by arbitrarily delimited "departments," after the French model. This was too great a change and three years later the historic territorial divisions were restored, but provincialism had died. Hollanders, Zeelanders, Groningers were all Netherlanders now, or "Bataves" if revolutionists, or "Hollanders" if they bowed to foreign usage. Only in Friesland, where since the earliest Middle Ages provincial nationalism has been stronger than anywhere else, has it survived to some extent until the present, fostered by the persistence of the Frisian language in the rural districts. The lack of opposition to the political unification of the Netherlands once it was begun, is noteworthy. The reforms filled a need long felt but that tradition was reluctant to accept.

Political unification required a complete reform of local provincial administration. This was carried out in the tenth year of the revolution, but the new system was constantly changed until 1813, the year of liberation. In one respect, the Napoleonic system survives to this day: the enormous reduction of provincial influence in the administration. The excessive provincialism of the republican period had produced a reaction. Subsequent legislators have always hesitated to give power to provincial authorities.

Centralization also required a complete reform of finance and taxation.

The debts of all the provinces were amalgamated, and the millions owed by the former East India Company added to the total. This made a nice lump sum of about 600,000,000 guilders, increased by ten years of war to 1,100,000,000 guilders. The annual interest on this debt alone amounted to more than 30,000,000 guilders, which left not a cent of the state's income for the cost of administration or for further war expenditures. The "Patriots" found a financial expert, Isaac Gogel, who devised for the Netherlands the first modern system of taxation, which equitably distributed the incidence of taxation and doubled the income of the state.

Centralization of the government made possible a reorganization of the navy which as regards ships and equipment was better in this period of greatest humiliation than at any time during the XVIIIth century. The rank and file of the sailors, however, refused to risk their lives for a pro-French and anti-Orangist state. For the first time the army became a truly national institution, composed of Netherlanders and commanded by Netherlanders. It received its training under the Corsican on the battlefields of Europe. Centralization also entailed a total reorganization of the judiciary and the creation of a supreme court for the whole nation (1801), the introduction of a new criminal code, (mainly based on Roman-Dutch law), and of a civil code (based on the French Code Napoleon).

The first Constitution of the Batave Republic instituted a Department of Education (1798), a great novelty in XVIIIth century Europe. Educational reform, widely discussed in the Netherlands before the revolution under the influence of Rousseau, and of the reforms accomplished in Westphalia and Prussia by North German educators, could now break through the resistance of traditional institutions. Laws organizing education for the Netherland masses were promulgated in 1801 and 1803, and in 1806 they were put into effect. Qualification tests for teachers were introduced, new text books written, pedagogic methods studied and propagated. The general aim of Netherland education was "to form the mental abilities of the children and to develop in them civic and Christian virtues." Far-reaching educational reforms helped to maintain the high rank of the Netherlands among civilized nations. Many of these reforms were introduced rather dictatorially, but their effects were nonetheless beneficial. The second Netherland state could not have been built after the liberation without this preparatory work.

Besides these reforms, the revolution brought democracy in its modern sense to the Netherlands. The old democratic institutions of the Middle Ages had gradually disappeared, and the XVIIIth century had disposed of their last remnants in Friesland. Only in Drente had a semblance of dem-

ocratic rural administration survived. The local autonomy that had persisted in the *Waterschappen*—drainage districts—had largely lost its democratic character. Here the revolution first democratized and then sought to suppress the institution, but practical difficulties happily prevented this and the *Waterschappen* remained an effective part of Netherland administration. In local and national government the French theories of 1797 prevailed, and the franchise was given to every Netherland male over twenty. Many historians contend that this enfranchisement was too rapid to be effective, that the people were not ripe for it. This seems hardly correct. In 1797 the draft of a constitution was submitted to a general plebiscite. Of 400,000 potential voters 137,000 went to the polls—one out of three—which, for a people without political experience and with a large percentage of illiterates was by no means bad. Moreover, Jews representing at least 20,000 voters were excluded, as were Orangists. A second plebiscite brought the number of voters up to 165,000. Even modern democracies at times find it difficult to get more than forty or fifty percent of their electorate to the polls. Then the number of voters dropped rapidly. In 1801 only 67,000 appeared at the polls, and in 1809 no more than 14,000—this time out of a restricted electorate of 350,000. This is easily explained by the conviction of the franchise holders that however they voted, the decrees submitted for their approval would be put into effect by virtue of Napoleon's military power behind them. One of the democratic rights given to the people was that of petition and the Dutch people knew how to use it; more than 200,000 names appeared on a petition for the maintenance of the ministers of the Reformed Church on the payroll of the state.

The National Convention of 1796 granted equality of rights to dissenters and Catholics and, after some hesitation, to Jews. Its attempts at a complete separation of Church and State failed. A privileged but no longer a dominating position was reserved for the Dutch Reformed Church. King Louis Bonaparte, officially a member of the Roman Catholic Church, promoted the interests of his co-religionists wherever he could without offending his Reformed subjects. In view of former conditions, it is not surprising that Catholics generally were among the most revolutionary and most democratic elements of the citizenry. Jews, who numbered about 80,000, mostly in Amsterdam, also viewed the revolutionary movement with favor, although their status had been more satisfactory than that of Catholics. Even among Baptists and other Protestant dissenters, a reaction against the former predominance of the Reformed Church lent support to the liberal groups. This growing party formation was rudely opposed by the French dictatorial regime, but it was not without future consequences.

The French period was by no means a social revolution, for the structure of Netherland society was hardly touched. There was no large-scale shifting of property rights, or complete overthrow of the leading classes as in France. The actual administration was taken out of the hands of the oligarchs to be entrusted to middleclass intellectuals but, as early as 1801 by order of Napoleon Bonaparte the revolutionary government began to encourage the return of patriot oligarchs to public office. Many Orangist oligarchs also joined the new regime after the peace treaty of 1806, when even the prince of Orange seemed satisfied to give up all claims to his Netherland offices and possessions. The elevation of Louis Bonaparte to the throne and the creation of a new nobility by this improvised monarch brought a rush of former oligarchs to the feet of His Corsican Majesty in the hope of being admitted and having their former rank restored. They showed striking lack of human dignity, but they retained their social privileges.

The French period was one of internal growth restricted by foreign domination. Not for a moment were the Netherlands permitted to follow their own course in national or international politics. Several times the Batave Republic sought to escape from strangling French control and return to a policy of neutrality between France and Britain, but Napoleon was far too alert for that. In exchange for their "cooperation," the Bataves gained a few minor advantages, such as the incorporation in the territory of the Republic of all former Prussian enclaves, a leftover of the faint-hearted Netherland policy in the Cleve-Juliers problem of 1609. Out of the Prussian debacle of 1806 King Louis even annexed East Friesland. The latter acquisition was valueless. Netherland influence had become extinct in the small country, and King Louis's officials met with distrust and opposition. The mistakes of the XVIIth century could not be rectified by the weak Netherland state of 1806.

The peace treaty of 1802 between France and Britain restored to the Netherlands all their lost colonies except Ceylon, and desperate attempts were made to save them from again falling into British hands. The leaders of the Batave Republic vainly sought to remain neutral when Franco-British hostilities were renewed in 1803, but Napoleon would permit no such combinations. The result was that by 1812 the Netherland flag was hauled down all over the world except, by the irony of history, in the island of Deshima near Nagasaki in Japan. The conservative Japanese authorities were obdurate in their determination to deal with Holland and Holland alone, whether a Netherland state existed or not. Under their protection, Commander Hendrick Doeff kept the Dutch flag flying over Deshima's trading post. The renewal of the war prevented the full development of the



revolution in Java, where sudden and complete administrative and economic reform had finally come in 1808.

Java, the only important colony left to the Netherlands in 1805, three years after the renewal of conflict, was for sixteen years virtually isolated from the home country. The East India Company had been dissolved in 1796, and its territories had become part of the Netherlands state. There was little change in Batavia during the first ten years of the new regime. A local demonstration of "revolutionists" was rapidly suppressed and its originators punished. The principles of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" were never put into practice in the tropical Netherlands. The economic position of Batavia improved rapidly after the monopoly system had been modified by the necessities of war. Cut off from the Netherlands, the Batavian government was obliged to sell Java's products to neutrals. For a decade American trade with Batavia flourished, giving "Java coffee" the reputation that still makes its name valuable for advertising purposes in the United States. There was no lack of money in Batavia while this trade prospered and the friendship of the principal native rulers guaranteed internal security. Leading a semi-autonomous existence, the Batavian Government could take some liberties in international affairs, and it denied its resources to French military "advisors" sent from Europe to convert the island into an operational base against Britain.

Meanwhile, the republican government at home was discussing theories of colonial administration. Should Java be thrown open to free enterprise or not? Should the ancient forms of communal land-ownership be preserved, or should individual property rights be introduced in the hope of stimulating competition in accordance with economic theories then prevailing in Europe? On the whole, conservatism predominated in the council halls of The Hague. The East Indies were to be administered for "the greatest possible welfare of the inhabitants, the greatest possible advantage of Dutch commerce, and the greatest possible profit of the finances of the Netherlands state,"—three aims difficult to reconcile. The principle that "colonies are maintained for the benefit of the mother country" easily prevailed. Batavia could ignore these theoretical discussions, and Bonaparte considered Java important only as a base for attack on British India.

For this purpose, Herman Willem Daendels, the ex-lawyer, ex-general, was sent to the Far East although he had not the slightest knowledge of Javanese affairs. There he thoroughly shook up the lazy, conservative and far from honest Dutch officials left over from the days of the Company. In a few years, he raised an army, built roads and defense works, organized a political administration instead of the former Company system based on commercial traditions, reorganized the judiciary, extended the compulsory

production of coffee, and threw a large part of Java open to private enterprise. Government land was sold along with the natives in their villages and the governor general, faithful to the economic if not to the political principles of Liberalism, proclaimed "all protection of the native peasants to be merely an encouragement to laziness." He contended that free labor contracts between the planter-capitalists and the native workers would produce the greatest possible productivity. The former patriot, who had thundered against the "tyranny" of poor good-natured Prince William V became the worst of dictators. In 1811 his regime came to an end and a few weeks later Java was conquered by a strong force under Lord Minto, governor-general of British India. Whatever the merits and mistakes of Daendels, he had opened a new period in East Indian history.

For fifteen years the pro-French party in the Netherlands had carried on under the greatest difficulties. Their hands were never free, beset as they were with insoluble problems. Rich as the Netherlands were, no government could survive indefinitely when forced by foreign pressure to spend twice the amount of its revenues. Trade and industry came to a standstill. In the few months of 1802 and 1803 when peace prevailed, no less than four thousand Dutch merchantmen took to sea, many of them only to fall into British hands before they could return. Bonds issued by foreign government through Amsterdam banks before the war amounted to more than 650,000,000 guilders. The forty million guilders interest due on these bonds every year was never paid. Some bankers had exported part of their capital to the United States. The new American Republic, in dire need of capital, found a plentiful source in the money market of Amsterdam after the stabilization of her credit by Alexander Hamilton's financial reorganization. Dutch capital financed public works such as bridges and canals, and was invested in Hamilton's Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures. The largest of these Dutch capitalist concerns was the Holland Land Company, through which three Amsterdam bankers invested one and a half million guilders in land in upper New York State. About three million acres, still recognizable on the map by Dutch place-names—Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Batavia—became the property of this Company. Their investments brought only small returns. Besides American investments, large sums were safely deposited in London, and all through the French period Amsterdam bankers were able to continue transactions which preserved at least a part of Holland's economic power for the future. Agriculture and inland trade with Westphalia, the Rhineland, and Belgium alone flourished.

Misery and unemployment caused dissatisfaction; and the thoughts of the people turned to the past, when the House of Orange had been the

traditional palladium of liberty and prosperity. But the prince—the son of William V—was powerless, and had sought refuge with his Hohenzollern relatives. On his estates in Silesia he waited for better times. The incorporation of the Netherlands in the French empire brought no financial relief. The most important innovations of Napoleon were a State Police, a necessary attribute of dictatorship; compulsory military service, which sent about twenty-eight thousand Netherlanders to bleed on a hundred battlefields from Lisbon to Moscow; the French Code Napoleon, which replaced the newly introduced Dutch Code; and the introduction of French as the official language, to be used in preference to or along with Dutch. Anti-French feeling among the people rose high. Some political leaders silently prepared for the restoration of independence. Only a few fanatic militarists, blind devotees of war, were really loyal to the Emperor. In general, apathy weighed heavily upon the nation. A visit by Napoleon brought the people cheering into the streets—not without some official encouragement—but the regular visits of French recruiting sergeants brought the peasants out with scythes and pitchforks, in futile efforts to save their children from Armageddon. A restoration of independence was impossible until Napoleon's power was broken by his enemies. His defeat in Russia caused some unrest; his defeat at Leipzig, a revolt.

The leader of the national movement was Gijsbrecht Karel van Hogendorp, a member of the former Orangist faction in the oligarchy. Hogendorp received enthusiastic support from some other members of the aristocracy, some officers of the army, navy, and merchant marine, part of the burgher class at The Hague, and the common people in Amsterdam; but in general the well-to-do classes were hesitant, and the former oligarchy fearful. The latter refused to take courageous action, and so forfeited all right to a leading role in the new Netherland state. An Orangist independence movement spread over the western part of the country, while in the eastern provinces the people warmly welcomed the advance units of a liberating allied army, bands of Cossacks and Prussian infantry. The prince of Orange entered The Hague on November 30, 1813. In two weeks' time the Netherlands were free. Popular uprisings and the allied invaders had driven out the enemy, whose troops, mostly of poor quality, had run away for fear of being cut off from the main body of the French army. Dutch volunteers engaged in a few skirmishes and contented themselves with surrounding and blockading the fortresses still under French control. But everywhere and unequivocally, even in the former "lands of the Generality" in Brabant, where people had little reason to cherish memories of the pre-French period, the masses expressed their determination to rebuild a free Netherland state.

This was undertaken by Prince William VI, son of Stadhouder William V, who had left in 1795 and died in exile. With the assistance of Hogendorp and others he hastily reorganized an administration, retaining the whole structure built up in the French period; began to build up an army and navy to give the Netherlands their rightful place among the allied nations and reasonable freedom of action in international affairs. In four months, 12,000 men were armed, equipped and trained—not a bad achievement if we consider that their armament had to be collected piecemeal or borrowed from Britain. Meanwhile an internal issue of the utmost importance had been settled. After some hesitation, the prince of Orange dropped all idea of restoring the ancient institutions and he accepted the sovereignty of the Netherlands, with the title of Sovereign Prince. But, as he expressed it himself in his first proclamation, “only under the guarantee of a wise constitution that will safeguard your freedom against eventual abuses.” Thus, the long internal constitutional conflict, as old as the Republic of the Netherlands, came to an end with a reconciliation of monarchical and constitutional principles.

It remained to be determined what and whose this “freedom” was. Hogendorp seriously considered a partition of political influence between the new sovereign and the former oligarchy. In his proclamation to the people calling them to arms against the oppressor, he inserted the significant lines: “All leading people will have a part in the new government; the common people will have a holiday with entertainment at public expense.” A “holiday” was a nice reward to offer for the fighting and work to be done. The “leading men” of the Batave tribe who had haunted the historians of the Republic since Grotius’ time, were not yet laid in their long-forgotten graves, despite the efforts of Professor Kluit. Yet the “leading men” showed little interest in taking a share in political affairs. Several members of the committee appointed to draft a constitution under Hogendorp, preferred to let the ghosts of the past rest in peace and, in the mocking words of Talleyrand, “to lay the new sovereign in Napoleon’s bed.”

The few years of French domination had already created a bureaucracy whose ideal of service was to dictate laws from behind an office desk. In a way a belated revenge for Philip of Spain! This was much to the liking of the new sovereign, an ambitious, self-opinionated man whose temperament precluded a free exchange of ideas with others and whose enormous capacity for work predisposed him in favor of a bureaucratic administration. So in the new constitution the rights of the people were overshadowed by the power of the executive. His ministers were merely his servants. The Assembly of the States General was revived and its members elected by the provinces. They were no longer to represent these provinces but were

to act as an independent body, deciding by a majority. The influence of the new States General was limited, however, for they exercised only a limited control over public finances and their authority was not to be compared to that of the king. In case they were restored by Britain, the colonies were to be administered at the pleasure of the sovereign. The States of the various provinces, representing only a very small part of the people, were purely formal institutions unable to withstand the powerful provincial governors appointed by the sovereign.<sup>52</sup>

The new monarch found it easy to seize the reins of his administration and surround himself with congenial advisors. Hogendorp did not long enjoy his confidence. Cornelis van Maanen, a narrow-minded official—a revolutionary who had become a servile official of the pro-French government and had held aloof from the national movement until he was sure that going over would not hurt his interests—became the prince's principal advisor. The choice indicated the predilection of the new ruler, and it explains much of what was to come.

Foreign and not home affairs were the prince's first concern. His state was established but what were its boundaries? Again the all-important question of the eastern and southern frontier of the Netherlands had to be faced. The ancient coastland tradition that "Holland lived by the sea and should not be bothered with continental affairs" still survived. It was the Amsterdam point of view, which persisted in considering Netherland territory as a mere glacis protecting the great port. In the XVIIth century this conception had prevented territorial expansion to the south and east. The princes of Orange had always been interested in the Netherlands as a whole and given due consideration to frontier problems. An opportunity to settle the problem seemed now to offer itself. The French Revolution had incorporated both the Austro-Belgian provinces and the old bishopric of Liège in the French Republic. Napoleon had erased all political entities that existed before 1795 on the left bank of the Rhine and in Westphalia. These territories had become "free," the restoration of their former rulers not being contemplated by the great powers. Austria was no longer interested in her former Belgian territory and the political extermination of the petty German princes was convenient both to their peoples and to the great powers. What was to be the fate of those territories?

Nobody thought it necessary to consult the inhabitants. In Great Britain the opposition had criticized the recognition of the prince of Orange before the Dutch people had expressed their preference for a monarchy or a republic, but that had been a mere political gesture. No one even *thought* of consulting the wishes of the liberated peoples. For many years, against the wishes of his father, the old stadhouder, Prince William had planned

to restore Lowland unity as it existed in 1576. Such a reunion admirably suited British interests in 1798 and later years, when Britain was so dominated by fear of French expansionism that she wanted to create a strong bulwark on the French northern frontier. Every time post-victory settlements were discussed among the Allies of 1803, 1805, and 1809, Britain showed her desire for a union of the northern and southern Low Countries or for a division of the southern provinces between the Netherlands and one of the stronger German states, either Austria or Prussia. For a few years the British Government—a startling fact today!—worked to establish the Prussians in Brussels, Namur, and Ostende. The Netherlands were to receive Antwerp, Malines, and all land north of a line connecting these two cities with Maastricht.<sup>53</sup> Russia suggested the incorporation of both the Netherlands and Belgium into Prussia—which would have saved them from Hitler's invasion the worst possible way—but later Czar Alexander, under Polish influence, objected to the aggrandizement of Prussia. Neither Austria nor Prussia were particularly interested in acquiring territory west of the Meuse and neither objected in principle to the unification of the Low Countries.

Prince William, aware of this favorable disposition of the great powers, boldly advanced his own demands. They were amazingly large. Besides the unification of the Low Countries, he asked for all the territory between the north bank of the Moselle and the left bank of the Rhine. This would have made Coblenz the southeastern frontier-fortress of his kingdom. The prince even hoped to acquire a bridgehead on the right bank of the Rhine by the restoration and enlargement of his patrimonial domain of Nassau. He contended that only by such a wide extension of Dutch territory could the new Netherlands kingdom be made secure. There was little likelihood that the ambitions of the first Dutch sovereign would be gratified. But his demands influenced British opinion. Lord Castlereagh first projected a southern boundary for the Netherlands including Antwerp, Malines, Maastricht, Juliers, and either Cologne or Duesseldorf, the remaining part of the southern Low Countries being reserved for Austria or Prussia.<sup>54</sup> After the refusal of both powers to commit themselves to the defense of the Low Countries by the acquisition of territory there, the British statesman projected a new line following the present northern boundary of France to the Sambre, then the course of that river to Charleroi, from where it was to follow the Meuse roughly with Dutch bridgeheads for the fortresses of Namur, Liège and Maastricht. Near Maastricht it was to run due east towards the Rhine, including Aachen, Juliers, and Cologne, into the Netherlands. The districts south of this line between the Meuse and the Rhine (including Luxemburg) he wanted to become Prussian, in order to

interest both the Netherlands and Prussia in keeping France within the boundaries assigned to her.

The trouble with these plans, which did not go far enough to suit the wishes of Prince William, was that neither Prussia nor Austria was willing to accept them. Austria would gladly have left a considerable part of the land between the Meuse and the Rhine in the hands of France, simply to preserve France as a counterweight against Prussia. The Berlin government preferred expansion to the east (in Saxony and Poland) rather than to the west. As these wishes suited neither Austria nor Russia, Prussia sought compensation in a westward expansion, and this was fatal to Prince William's grandiose expectations. Prussia claimed that an aggrandizement increasing her population by four million souls had been promised to her, and four million souls she was going to have—souls being as easily shifted, apparently, as cattle. The powerful and victorious czar of Russia was willing to consent to any settlement of western European affairs on the sole condition that Great Britain and the Netherlands take over his debt to the Amsterdam banking house of Hope and Company, amounting to eighty million guilders. After some bargaining, the two western states bought the Imperial consent for fifty millions. The solution finally adopted was the union of Belgium and the Netherlands in the "Kingdom of the United Low Countries." The eastern boundary from the North Sea to the Meuse was to be largely identical with the pre-revolutionary demarcation. South of Nijmegen the boundary would follow the Meuse at "a gun-shot's distance" as far as the old principality of Valkenburg and from here it would coincide roughly with the eastern limits of the old duchy of Limburg. William, now King William I of the Low Countries, ceded his rights to his hereditary lands of Nassau in exchange for the duchy of Luxemburg, but the Netherlands and Luxemburg were only united by a personal union. The principality, then including both the present grand-duchy and the Belgian province of Luxemburg, was to be a member of the newly formed German confederation and its capitol was to be garrisoned by Prussian troops as a Federal German fortress.

The arrangement of 1815 deprived the Netherlands of their last chance for expansion over the duchy of Cleve and minor principalities in the Westphalian border area, such as Bentheim which then had close cultural ties with its western neighbor. To exchange these possibilities for a personal union with Luxemburg was a bad bargain indeed. Luxemburg, although united with the Low Countries since the first Duke Philip of Burgundy, had never taken part in Lowland affairs. It did not send its representatives to the States General in the Burgundian period; it was never counted among the "seventeen provinces"; it did not take part in the national

revolt of 1576; it is geographically separated from the Low Countries by the difficult mountainous area of the Ardennes forest; it had no linguistic or cultural ties with the Lowlands. The acquisition by the House of Orange of the grand-duchy of Luxemburg with a Prussian garrison in its capital, an open boundary towards France, and its membership in the German confederation, could be only a burden to the Netherlands. However, King William sought to assimilate Luxemburg into his kingdom, practically as another province. The king's territorial ambitions had succeeded in extending his lands as far as the Moselle, but this merely weakened the new state. Yet it would be wrong to blame King William alone for the outcome of these negotiations. Prussia had excellent bargaining claims to territory on both banks of the Rhine, once part of Cleve, and to territory west of the Meuse and around Venlo, granted to her through the weakness of Holland's oligarchy in the War of the Spanish Succession. For this weakness the new Netherland kingdom had to suffer.

By separate agreement Great Britain consented to restore to the Netherlands most of their former overseas possessions. The western section of Guyana, Cape Colony, and Ceylon were to remain British. The Amsterdam merchants deplored the loss of Guyana where they had considerable investments, but the nation lost most in South Africa. The Cape was the only national overseas settlement where large numbers of Netherlanders could make a new home. Great Britain was under no moral or legal obligation to restore the colonies. The promise, made to the late Stadhouder William V in 1795, was annulled by the Treaty of Amiens, which was accepted by all parties concerned, even by Prince William, the stadhouder's son, then in exile in Germany. In restoring the colonies, Britain was prompted by the desire to strengthen the new Lowland state for it was to serve as "Britain's sentry on the continent" against France. Important in the return of the colonies was the disappointing financial result of British administration in Java and the Moluccas. Thomas Stamford Raffles, governor of Java during the British interregnum, vehemently protested against the cession of his beloved island and pointed out its future economic possibilities. This mattered little to the British statesmen whose attention was wholly concentrated on Europe. They knew little and cared less about Java.

The great powers agreed upon the reunion of the Low Countries. In the Netherlands apathy was stronger than antipathy to the proposal, but few were in favor of it. In Belgium the Catholic clergy and higher aristocracy—descendants of the aristocrats who had once been the colleagues of Prince William I of Orange—were definitely opposed to the plan. Their interests and their convictions alike called for a restoration of Austrian-Habsburg sovereignty, with privileges for the Catholic Church and diplo-



matic and military careers for the aristocrats. The liberal bourgeoisie, upper middleclass and intellectuals, regretted the secession from France. Thoroughly Frenchified during the revolutionary and Napoleonic eras, they had nothing in common with the Protestant, Dutch-speaking Netherlands and their burghers. The lower middleclass and the masses were more in favor of reunion, but who considered their opinion?

The Netherland constitution of 1814 was modified to suit the wishes of the Belgian leaders, for instance by the institution of an Upper Chamber, a sort of House of Lords, where the Merodes, the Aerschots, the Lignes could sit in state to discuss problems of high policy. Even so, the majority of the "notable people" of Belgium, convened by the king, rejected the constitution. King William ignored this vote of nonconfidence—he could hardly have done otherwise—but having forced acceptance of the constitution, he failed to heed the warning expressed in this vote and to make concessions to the large majority of the southern middleclass that had opposed his government. In fifteen years the union was broken, in spite of the great advantages Belgium gained from William's rule.

During the fifteen years that elapsed between the Congress of Vienna and the secession of Belgium, art, culture and politics were at a low ebb in the northern Low Countries. The southern provinces profited from the great romantic movement in France. In the north both French and German influence infiltrated, but only weakly. The citizens entrusted public affairs with confidence to "Father William," who indeed had their interest at heart but disliked to entrust power to others. The Netherlands which thirty years before had been a republic teeming with internal strife when adjacent monarchies were blessed with "enlightened despots," found themselves under an enlightened paternalism which vainly sought to rouse them from their economic lethargy. King William worked day and night; he invested millions of his own money in economic enterprises, loaned other millions to the state for public works. Canals were dug connecting the ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam with the sea and providing shorter inland waterways intersecting the rivers; roads were built (which popular tradition in the Netherlands still ascribes to Napoleon!); manufactures were started, shipbuilding revived and the East Indian trade partly resuscitated through the establishment of the *Nederlandsche Handelmaatschappij* (the Netherland Society of Commerce).

But the Netherlanders remained lethargic. King William urged them forward but all attempts at restoring the ancient staple trades and shipping failed. The people had hoped that shipping would revive of its own accord as soon as the sea was free. For generations the Dutch had held a prominent place in all overseas trade; surely the world could not get along without

the old-fashioned Dutch tramps on all the seven seas. But the world did get along without them and quite well at that. Even the East Indies seemed to get along without Dutch trade. The Netherland Society of Commerce was established on purpose to regain economic influence in territory which politically had been returned by Britain, but which economically was still wholly within her sphere of influence. It was doubtful how long the political authority of the Netherlands could be maintained under such circumstances. The Asiatic empire began to crumble from the moment of its re-establishment. Not that there was any difficulty in restoring Dutch authority over Java, for this was done without any disturbance or resistance. Some opposition manifested itself in the Moluccas when the natives of these islands became fearful of a restoration of the old monopoly system.

It was not the natives, but certain Britishers who proved dangerous to the re-established Batavian government. Thomas Stamford Raffles, back in the Indies as governor of British Sumatra, a small strip of territory on the southwestern coast of the island, harassed the Dutch whenever he could and persisted in setting up new British outposts in territory that was clearly Dutch under the treaty of 1814. After numerous raids and equally numerous rebukes from his own superiors, he finally founded Singapore on the southern point of Dutch Malaya. It was a master stroke. Long and tedious negotiations ended with an exchange of territory in 1824. Malaya became British and British Sumatra became Dutch. The British promised to refrain from further incursions into the East Indian islands. The Batavian Government was then faced with a revolt of part of Java under a prince of Djokjakarta and bothered little about Malaya or Sumatra, so good relations were re-established. However, the urge to restore the Netherlands as the center of the spice and coffee trade was naturally strengthened by these events.

Commerce had changed since the middle of the XVIIIth century, and the full results of that transformation now became apparent. Producers of export goods sought direct contact with their consumers, and business men from Russia or Germany ordered their merchandise direct from the producing areas without resorting to intermediate markets like the Netherlands. Traditional methods of handling merchandise in Dutch ports further prevented a recovery of Holland's former commercial position. The XIXth century brought an enormous increase in the volume of merchandise transported, and the out-of-date regulations prevailing in Amsterdam and Rotterdam were a hindrance to mass exchange. Finally the increase in the tonnage of merchant ships made entrance to Dutch harbors impossible. Dutch trade and shipping continued to decline until the second half of the XIXth century.

Poverty was general. Of two million inhabitants, seven hundred thousand were dependent upon charity, if contemporary reports are reliable. Societies were founded to take the destitute of the cities back to the countryside. Colonies were started in the peat districts of Friesland and Groningen. These methods proved only palliatives for the needs of the masses. For the first time there was mass emigration from the Netherlands to America, under the combined effect of poverty and religious persecution. That too occurred in the XIXth century in the Netherlands, albeit in a comparatively mild form. Proportionally the number of emigrants remained far below that of many other European countries at the same time, and Dutch immigrants arriving in the United States were never so completely destitute as many of the Irish and Germans. Yet the departure of more than thirty thousand people in forty years for unknown lands where foreign tongues were spoken presents a striking contrast to the XVIIth century when it was difficult to find a few thousand settlers for New Netherland.

Religious persecution has been mentioned as one of the causes of this emigration. King William, becoming more autocratic with the passing of time, had incorporated all Dutch Reformed churches into one National Church, over which the State exercised a certain supervision. The new national Church was dominated by a rationalist interpretation of dogma. The Synod of Dordrecht, the foundation of the Church in Republican times, was abhorred as a monument of intolerance and narrow-mindedness. Official Calvinism became formal, traditional and lifeless, without strength of faith. Willem Bilderdijk, the poet-historian, was one of the first to raise his voice against this trend. After the restoration he devoted his time to lectures on Netherland history at the university of Leiden. Holding no official position, he gathered small classes of voluntary students around him and for their benefit expounded his views in the form of a running and violently critical commentary on Wagenaar's history. Wagenaar had presented the oligarchic-republican view of the past. Bilderdijk, taking as a basis the work of Kluit but exaggerating wildly, denounced all oligarchic leaders as criminals, fools or worse, and lauded without measure the House of Orange and Unionist factions in the Republic. He scoffed at Grotius and his theory of the *Antiquity of the Batave Republic*. Civilis, so long the idol of republicanism, was put in his proper place as a mere rebel against mighty emperors. The long buried sovereignty of the provincial States Assemblies was covered with invective. Despite his strong bias, the force of his personality and his burning conviction aroused in his youthful listeners sentiments and ideas that contributed greatly to the shaping of future Netherland social institutions.

Bilderdijk became one of the originators of a religious revival among the intellectual classes. Another movement among the rural population of the northern and eastern provinces called for a return to the principles of Dordrecht, a dogmatic and strict ecclesiastical discipline. To its adherents state interference in religious affairs was as abhorrent as it had been to the first Calvinists. State interference, they contended, undermined dogma and fostered laxity of discipline. In separation from the official Reformed Church they saw the only possibility of reform. King William opposed this on legal grounds. Gradually a conflict developed which led to the persecution of the separatists and their emigration to the United States, where in Michigan and Iowa their descendants continue to follow the religious traditions of their ancestors. It is safe to say however, that without stringent poverty among the rural classes, emigration would never have drawn so many overseas.

This religious conflict came to a head after 1830. In nearly all fields of spiritual activity, the first twenty years of William's reign were lifeless. An Amsterdam Chief of Police—both man and office left over from Napoleonic days—objected to performances of Shakespeare and Schiller. "Something in between the Greek and the French drama" seemed to him suitable for the Amsterdam public. So he sought to combine his function of chief of police with that of playwright, but with poor artistic results. Even so, for the public his art was not too low, but rather too high. The quiet, pious Amsterdam burghers preferred shows with a great display of costumes and ballets. Some promise was shown in literature and painting, but it was not until the middle thirties that anything original was done in the world of letters, and painting had to wait another decade or so. Music was "no longer an art but merely a pastime" according to a contemporary critic, and it was not until 1840 that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was performed in the Netherlands. Foreigners said that the only music Dutchmen enjoyed was the tinkling of coins and of church bells, but there was an orchestra in Amsterdam's aristocratic club *Blaas en Strijkklust*, freely translated: "The Friends of Blowing and Bowing." These enthusiasts did not achieve much and German musicians—it was the time of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann—came to the rescue of Dutch music-lovers. A German Opera Company brought Mozart and Weber to Amsterdam. Around 1830 new blood began to circulate in the lifeless body of Dutch art, but it was not thoroughly animated for a long time.

Music had greater appeal in Brussels than in Amsterdam. Brussels has probably the unique distinction of having begun a successful revolution in an opera house. The performance of Auber's *La Muette de Portici* in August 1830 was the beginning of the anti-Netherland revolt that ended with

the disruption of the recently united Low Countries. From the stage sounded the inflammatory, though somewhat bombastic lines:

“For a slave what peril counts,  
Better death than live in chains.  
Off the yoke that stifles us!  
Perish aliens at our hands,  
Holy lore of native land  
Give me courage, give me pride!  
To my country, life I owe,  
And she owes me liberty!”

Wild applause, general commotion among the audience, which was taken up by crowds of young people in the street, and the revolution was started.

In 1830 the Belgians were not, of course, the “slaves of foreigners,” nor were they living miserably. They had benefited perhaps more than the Netherlanders from King William’s reign, for his economic policy of tariff barriers served the industrial interests of Belgium better than the commercial interest of Holland. The port of Antwerp, in chains for two centuries, was free for the first time since 1585. It became so much more prosperous than Amsterdam and Rotterdam, that it provoked the jealousy of its northern competitors. Religious worship was free in Belgium, although King William made a great mistake in tampering with the Catholic Church, its relations with Rome and its seminaries. Belgium was far more populous than the Netherlands—three and a half million inhabitants against two millions. In spite of centuries of economic restriction, its prosperity if not its wealth was considered greater than that of the Netherlands. King William had caused dissatisfaction among the higher classes by forcibly promoting the use of the Dutch language in the Flemish speaking provinces. Such grievances added to political objections to the absolute character of the monarchy outweighed what economic advantages the Belgian middle class and industrial interests derived from the union. A lack of mutual understanding had been fostered by the economic and political events of the two preceding centuries, and King William was not the right man to deal with such a delicate situation. Add to it the religious antithesis and the old self-centered attitude of the province of Holland, whose interests had been impaired rather than fostered by the union. Of all these factors a group of pro-French Belgians decided to take advantage.

The “uprising” following the performance of *La Muette de Portici* was organized, but the movement immediately got out of hand and assumed the aspect of a proletarian revolution in which the poorest elements of the cities vented their anger against the wealthier classes. France had known

similar proletarian uprisings and even in Britain the masses were in ebullition. Factories and machines were destroyed. The government hesitated and failed to subdue the opposition either by blandishment or by force. They allowed the middleclasses in Brussels to take the restoration of order into their own hands; subsequently they attacked Brussels only to withdraw their troops; finally they succeeded in antagonizing their own partisans. This development was not displeasing to strong groups in the North. It found natural support in France and unexpected sympathy in Britain, where the trend of foreign policy had changed and France was no longer considered a danger. The forcible protection of Dutch shipping by King William threatened to revive the Netherlands as a possible rival for control of the North Sea. Without Britain's support the union of North and South could never have been accomplished; and against her will it could hardly survive the slightest strain.

The events of 1830 rent asunder the entire political structure of the Low Countries. The issue was settled in a few weeks. The Netherlands and Belgium were again to be separated. Only the terms of separation remained to be determined. Nine years elapsed before both parties finally consented to an agreement which had been drafted in 1831 after the intervention of France and Britain. The conditions of the agreement may be considered favorable to the northern state, for some districts where the revolution had gained the upper hand, the towns of Venlo and Roermond on the Meuse for instance, were restored to its sovereignty. This was due to a short campaign in which Netherland troops defeated the newly formed Belgian army. Although the large majority of Northerners was quite satisfied to be separated from Belgium, King William persisted in refusing his consent in the vain hope that a change in the international situation might provide an opportunity to obtain better terms. This policy merely burdened the Netherland state with unnecessary military expenditures. As the unsettled dispute dragged on, he gradually lost the popular affection he had won by fifteen years of constant labor for the economic welfare of the country. The final arrangement of 1839 left the Netherlands all the territory they possessed before 1795 and in addition a strip of land connecting Maastricht and the old county of Valkenburg with Venlo and Brabant. The duchy of Luxemburg was divided, half of its territory going to Belgium.

The arrangement of 1839 left the Netherlands with a very weak southeastern boundary. At one place the strip of Dutch soil between the Belgian and German frontiers was only three miles wide. To make matters worse, the province of Limburg, although remaining an integral part of the Netherlands, became a member of the German confederation. This confusing relationship lasted until 1868. The treaty of 1839 declared Belgium a neutral

state, with its integrity guaranteed by Britain, France, and Prussia. This guarantee was not extended to the Netherlands, nor did they join in guaranteeing Belgian neutrality, but the natural effect of the new situation was that they too fell back into complete and passive neutrality. Great Britain had been King William's strongest supporter in the unification of the Low Countries, and Great Britain was also one of the principal agents of its dissolution. The close political connection that had existed between the Netherlands and Britain for fifteen years between unification and dissolution ceased to exist. Netherland neutrality, albeit a long standing political tradition, was now the result of resentment and weakness. It took decades for the nation to overcome the blows of 1830 and 1839 which reacted severely upon its political self-esteem. In some respects the events of 1839 and later years were a success for the cautious, Hollandish, burgherclass conception of the Netherland state over the more national and more daring aspirations represented in former days by the princes of Orange and their adherents. These events placed the land provinces completely under the influence of Holland. They also invited stronger German cultural and economic ties which had previously been much less close than those with France and Britain.

The experiment of 1815 had been most unfortunate. Whatever the desirability or possibility of a reunion between north and south, the way in which the problem was handled in 1815 was definitely wrong. It would have been difficult to choose a less opportune moment for reunion, than immediately after the Napoleonic period, when the peoples of north and south had drifted farther apart than ever before. In theory the union of the Low Countries in 1815 was an integral fusion of two existing units, but even King William realized that this did not correspond to reality, and that his was a dual monarchy. The ingenious constitutional prescription that The Hague and Brussels should serve alternately as residences of the king and the States General made this clear. Moreover, the new kingdom contained elements such as the city of Liège which had never before been incorporated into either of the Low Countries. This purely French center might eventually find its place in a Belgian state, but would never fit into a predominantly Dutch speaking entity. The bond of language made the South share in all French Catholic and French Liberal movements, in which the North took little or no interest. If the reunion was to be undertaken, it should have been in the form of a federation, not of a complete fusion. But fusion held greater attraction for the Northerners. Their national debt had risen to 1,726,000,000 guilders or nearly 850 guilders per inhabitant. As the payment of interest on this huge sum was utterly beyond the capacity of the nation, the government extended a decree of Napoleon,

under which two-thirds of the debt was "postponed" without interest. The southern provinces had a debt of 26,000,000 guilders, less than seven and a half guilders per inhabitant. That was why the Northerners favored total fusion. The financial advantages derived from fusion proved to be only temporary.

The separation left the Netherlands in a most difficult position. The public debt had again risen. In addition to the "postponed debt," the state owed 1,324,000,000 guilders. The public income was barely sufficient to meet the regular expense of the administration. King William, who had kept all financial matters in his own hands, who had stretched the terms of the Constitution to exclude public control of the budget, had to leave the solution of this problem to his successor. For years he had hoped that sooner or later the "fabulous wealth" of the Indies would come pouring in again, as it was supposed to have done in the good old days, and that Javanese labor and tropic fertility would restore the finances of his state. To this end he introduced a new system of exploitation in Java, the so-called "Culture System", no great returns from which resulted until after the old king had ceded his crown to his son. King William knew how dissatisfied his subjects were with the outcome of his administration. It embittered him, for he felt that his subjects had left all public cares to him, taking no perceptible interest, only to blame him for having ruled alone when his work proved a failure. He abdicated in 1840 and withdrew to Berlin, where he died three years later. His son William II succeeded him.<sup>55</sup>

When King William I retired, the paternal system of government disappeared. William II disliked to surrender authority even to the States General, but being more versatile than his father he could more easily adapt himself to circumstances. A restoration of public finances was the only real reform he attempted until the year of revolution (1848) convinced him that the time for constitutional reform had come. Of his own volition and out of a high sense of public duty, he ordered a study made of essential changes in the country's political institutions. The work of the committee appointed for this purpose received force of law with the revision of the Constitution agreed to on November 3, 1848. The second Netherland state had become a parliamentary monarchy.



## The Democratic Kingdom

THE crisis of 1830 was a severe blow to the kingdom of the Netherlands and affected its power and international prestige. The constitutional reform of 1848 marked the beginning of a revival which slowly restored the nation's position in world affairs. To understand the Netherlands of today, its national consciousness and pride, one must know the Netherlands of 1840 and appraise the progress made in the past one hundred years. Not the glorious memory of XVIIth century power, but the joy and pride of having transformed the dull narrow-minded community of 1840 into the enlightened and progressive democracy of 1940 is the living source of Netherlands patriotism. While the "burgher" of the middle 1800's dreamt of Michiel de Ruyter and John De Witt and basked in the glory of the past, the modern Netherlands are proud of the great achievements and high culture of their *own* generation.

The kingdom inherited by King William II in 1840 was composed of the same three territorial units that today form the Netherlands State—the Netherlands in Europe, the Netherlands West Indies (now officially designated as "Surinam and Curaçao"), and the Netherlands East Indies. Besides these, the Netherlands still possessed a small colony on the African Gold Coast. No attempt was made to develop it after the abolition of the slave trade, and in 1873 it was ceded to Britain in exchange for certain rights in Sumatra. The territory of the European Netherlands is so small—13,000 square miles—compared to the West Indian area of more than 55,000 square miles and the East Indian island world covering no less than 735,000 square miles, that its economic dependence on the East and West Indies seemed a foregone conclusion, especially in the XIXth century, when the home country had lost so much of its commercial and political importance. To form a reasoned judgment on the European Netherlands, a prior investigation into the interrelations of the overseas territories and their value to the homeland is necessary.

In 1840 as in 1940, the three units comprising the Netherlands State formed a single political entity. But, contrary to what now obtains, none of the overseas territories in 1840 enjoyed autonomy. With the sole exception of the East Indian judiciary they were entirely subject to the home

country and were administered from Europe. The government of Batavia never enjoyed any autonomy except that which slow and difficult communications confer on a distant executive, however subordinate to higher authority at home. The history of the West Indies was different. For more than a hundred years Surinam, once a British settlement, had possessed some degree of self-government, and the colonists elected a representative council. After the restoration of 1816, this elective body was transformed into a cooptating council, modeled on Dutch oligarchic lines. In 1828, even this remnant of popular influence was destroyed and Surinam was placed under the absolute rule of a governor appointed by the king. Curaçao and the other Dutch West Indian islands were subordinate to the same executive until 1845. The restoration of the former council in 1832 brought no change, as only plantation owners or their representatives were eligible. As nearly all plantations were owned by bankers and capitalists in Amsterdam, the council actually represented only absentee-owners and not the inhabitants of the colony.

The Constitution of 1815 gave the king absolute and exclusive control over the colonies, the word "exclusive" having been inserted into the paragraph against the wishes of Van Hogendorp who drafted the constitution. The king was even relieved of rendering any account to the States General of eventual revenues from the colonies or of how these revenues were spent. Between 1815 and 1848, the colonies were no concern of the Netherlands nation, but only of the king. The constitution of 1848 reversed the situation, giving full control over colonial affairs to the States General. It did not provide for or even contemplate colonial autonomy. It did, however, establish distinct colonial administration which made it possible to introduce autonomy.

Any grant of autonomy raises the question whether the colonies are "ripe" for it. What were conditions in the Netherlands overseas territories in the middle of the XIXth century? The West Indian possessions were virtually bankrupt. The slave trade, once the chief source of Curaçao's prosperity, had come to an end at the beginning of the century. The British abolished slavery in 1834. Fourteen years later the French followed suit. The Dutch lagged behind. The conservatives retarded emancipation until 1862, when a law to that effect was finally passed by the States General. By that time Curaçao was economically dead. For more than sixty years after 1850, the population remained stationary and did not exceed 32,000. Prosperity burst upon the island after the last war, when international oil companies built refineries there for Venezuelan oil. As late as 1880, out of a total Curaçao budget of half a million guilders, the Netherlands Government had to contribute 150,000. The plight of Curaçao's island dependencies—

Aruba, Bonaire, San Saba, St. Eustachius and St. Martin—was even worse.

In the XVIIIth century the last three islands had been centers of sugar production and, during the American war of Independence, had profited enormously from smuggling ammunition to the revolutionists. In the XIXth century these sources of income had dried up, and the population of the islands dwindled. St. Eustachius' 10,000 inhabitants fell to only 1,400 in 1914, and since then their number has further declined. St. Martin lost half its inhabitants. Bonaire and Aruba suffered less. During the XIXth century their populations increased slowly, making a precarious living from agriculture and cattle raising. On these two islands the inhabitants are nearly all of mixed Negro and Indian blood, while the three Dutch Windward Islands are partly inhabited by whites. Around 1860 both groups were equally destitute. Only the Jewish community of Curaçao maintained some degree of prosperity; but many of its members, seeing their economic opportunities diminish, left for more promising areas.

Economically these islands could not support themselves. The discovery of phosphate deposits on Curaçao in 1875 gave some financial relief, but by the end of the century the colony was again in dire need of assistance. "Paternal" administration under the exclusive control by the Crown had left unpleasant memories. It had been, as a member of the Dutch parliament said "a period of continuous neglect, compulsion, and arbitrary rule"; but it is doubtful whether the islands could have flourished under *any* system. The causes of decay were beyond government control.

In Surinam, conditions were no better. Before emancipation there were about 50,000 inhabitants, of whom 36,000 were slaves. The plantations were all near the coast. The interior was thinly settled by bush negroes, descendants of run-away slaves, and a few thousand aboriginal Indians. Sugar had been the main source of agricultural wealth. It was ruined by the rise of European beet production. After emancipation the surviving plantations suffered from lack of labor. The condition of the plantations became hopeless, and the question was again raised whether Surinam could not provide a home for Netherlanders, who at this time were going by the thousand to the United States. An experiment was tried with a group of some four hundred Dutch peasants. Half of them died in the first few months. Neglect on the part of the administration was one of the causes of the catastrophe. The remainder wandered through the more accessible parts of the colony and finally settled in three places where five hundred of their descendants still live. In the opinion of Dutch colonial authorities, this showed that white colonization was impracticable although, compared to the experiences of the first British settlers in Virginia or of American pioneers in the Far West, the result was not discouraging. One thing appeared certain:

if Europeans were to make Surinam a land of white settlers, they could not suffer the competition of colored immigrants whose lower standard of life would make lucrative farming impossible for them. However, the colonial administration indulged in a series of experiments in colonization, which soon deprived white people of any chance. The first Dutch peasants came in 1845. A few years later some 500 settlers from the Island of Madeira were brought in, followed by 2,500 Chinese. The Chinese deserted the farms and plantations to devote their energies to more congenial tasks like shopkeeping. Then in 1873 the Government sought to meet the labor shortage by importing more than 30,000 British Indians. Shortly afterwards the influx of Javanese began. These successive waves of immigration made Surinam an ethnological and linguistic curiosity but added little to its productivity. As before, the colony remained dependent upon subsidies from home, which between 1870 and 1910 varied from 16,000 to 720,000 guilders annually.

From the above it will be clear that neither Surinam nor the island group was really "ripe" for autonomy. The Administration Act of 1865 however, introduced partial self-government by granting both territories colonial "States Assemblies," elected by a small number of franchise holders. The franchise, dependent on the payment of income tax, was exercised in Curaçao by about five percent of the population and in Surinam by one percent. Prior to the last war, this arrangement seemed satisfactory. With unexpected prosperity the post-war period was to bring new problems to some of the territories.

The Netherland State certainly derived neither luster nor power from its West Indian possessions in the XIXth century. The East Indies presented a totally different picture. King William I had begun by a fairly liberal administration of the East Indies. Many of the East India Company's institutions had disappeared during the French period and the ensuing British occupation. Daendels had reorganized the administration; and Raffles the system of taxation. The latter reform had completely transformed the character of European rule. The Company had levied taxation in the form of "forced deliveries," the compulsory production and delivery to Batavia's storehouses of products of commercial value. These taxes had been levied through native rulers and district chiefs, who retained their share and employed what methods they pleased to collect the produce. Raffles imposed taxation directly on the producer and although levying it in the form of agricultural produce, he was satisfied with such products as the native peasants grew for their own needs. Raffles's system was adapted from the tax methods used by the British in Bengal, and its introduction in Java was prompted by a sincere desire to improve the fate of the poor Java-

nese peasants, who had been terribly exploited by their local chiefs for the benefit both of the Dutch overlords and of the chiefs themselves. The main defect of Raffles's system was that it did not bring in sufficient income to maintain the administration. So in the mountainous districts south of Batavia, administratively set apart from the rest of Java for this purpose, compulsory coffee production was maintained under the old system.

King William I had to solve the problem of providing the East Indian administration with sufficient income without draining the Netherlands, as the East India Company had done in the last decades of its existence. The Company had found some returns, however inadequate, from Asiatic products. King William could expect even less returns. Java produced quantities of coffee, but after the Napoleonic wars the bottom had fallen out of the market. The spices of the Moluccas no longer brought the former high prices now that the monopoly of the islands had been broken by India. The British had surrendered political control over the Malay archipelago but still held first place in that area as importers and traders. To exclude the British from the Dutch Indies by barriers of any kind was explicitly forbidden by the treaty of London under which the colonies had been restored to the Netherlands. To all these problems were added Javanese unrest in Djocjakarta and intrigues by Mr. Raffles. Around 1826 the situation was so hopeless that withdrawal from the East seemed the most sensible policy for the Netherlands to follow.

In these circumstances the "Culture System" was introduced on the advice of Johannes van den Bosch, governor general of the Indies from 1830 until 1833. This system combined the tax methods of the Company and of Raffles, requiring each producer to devote a certain amount of land and labor to the production of commercially valuable crops. Fortunately for the Netherlands, prices again rose in Europe after the post-Napoleonic depression, and soon enormous quantities of sugar and coffee began to fill the warehouses of Amsterdam, which regained its position as a world market for colonial products. Chronologically, the culture system belongs to the reign of King William I; but it did not produce its effect until the reign of William II. The remittances from Batavia to the Netherland treasury during the first fifteen years of the new system were, in principle, applied to the settlement of East Indian debts to the home country, amounting to more than 168,000,000 guilders. This figure included the 134,000,000 taken over in 1796 from the East India Company by the State. During the reign of King William II, returns from the East Indies averaged 14,000,000 guilders a year, rising in the next decade to an average of 28,000,000. The Culture System gave the East Indies new significance for the Netherlands. For the first time a clear and sizeable profit was being derived, that did not

disappear into the pockets of a few people but alleviated the financial burden of the whole population.

The new system of exploitation focused Dutch interest on the island of Java, where alone it was fully applied. The Moluccas were of less interest than Java, and the other Dutch outposts in the archipelago had more political than economic significance. So long as Java remained a gold mine for Dutch finances, the government hesitated to expand its rule over less developed regions. This permitted further encroachments upon Netherland rights in the archipelago. In 1846 a British adventurer settled on Borneo's north coast, where he acquired the island of Labuan for his government and the succession to the throne of the native sultanate of Sarawak for himself. Protests by Netherland authorities were ignored. Great Britain, after 1830, had little interest in fostering good relations with the Netherlands.

In the Dutch Asiatic empire, exploited solely for the benefit of the Netherlands, there could be no question of autonomous institutions. Batavia still maintained its old principle of dual administration by which native rulers and political administration continued under Dutch supervision. This system implied respect of native laws and customs, and the administrative segregation of Netherlanders, Chinese and Indonesians. The Administration Act of 1854 sanctioned all these institutions, despite protests by a small group of progressives under the leadership of Walter van Hoevell, a former minister of the Reformed Church in the Indies. They denounced the Culture System as pernicious, but failed to obtain the support of the Liberals as a group. Van Hoevell was the first to state the principles that "the welfare of the colonists should be above all, and before all." The Administration Act of 1854 went no further than to guarantee the traditional rights of the natives to elect their headmen, to enjoy village autonomy and to maintain their own customary laws. As for the Netherlanders, the Act stipulated that they should be subject to laws as closely resembling those of the Netherlands as circumstances permitted.

The Culture System was utterly incompatible with the principles of liberalism. "Prosperity through compulsion"—the fundamental idea of Governor General Van den Bosch—did not and could not go hand in hand with "prosperity through individual liberty." Opposition from progressive groups pointed to the hardships wrought by the System; to famines in several districts; to arbitrary acts by officials; to oppression by native district chiefs, who forced the villagers to work far beyond the legally required limit so as to increase their bonus from additional production, and similar abuses. On the other hand, real prosperity did result from the compulsory system, and numerous new crops (tea and chincona for instance) were

introduced into the Indies. The area under production increased; the population more than doubled between 1815 and 1858, growing from 5,000,000 to 11,700,000! These results would hardly have been possible if the System had caused general and constant misery. But however bright the financial picture, there was another and darker side. Apart from the exploitation of the Indonesians, the ambition of Batavian officials under pressure from the home government to increase the yearly returns was reflected in the extreme penuriousness of the East Indian administration. Education, public works, even the protection of Netherland rights outside Java, were all neglected for the benefit of the Dutch treasury.<sup>56</sup>

The financial returns the Netherlands in Europe drew from the Indies made even Liberals reluctant to change so profitable a system. Around 1850 conditions in the Netherlands were such that the eventual loss of twenty million guilders of public income would have been disastrous. In 1849 the kingdom in Europe had 3,000,000 inhabitants as against 2,800,000 in 1840 and 2,000,000 in 1815. Until 1870 the increase of population was slow, only 27,000, or less than one percent a year. From that year to 1890 the increase was 70,000 or about one and a half percent annually, reaching a total of 5,000,000 in 1899. The growth was not equal in all parts of the kingdom. The "big cities"—Amsterdam in 1849 had only 224,000 inhabitants—grew faster than the countryside; and the density of population increased far more in Holland, now divided into the two provinces of North and South Holland, than in the eastern and southern provinces. In the cities the population doubled in the second half of the century. Rotterdam grew from 90,000 inhabitants to 286,000. The three southern provinces lagged far behind, with an increase of only 32 to 36 percent in fifty years. Immigration played a very small part in the increase in population, the total number of foreigners in the Netherlands never exceeded 50,000 in the second half of the XIXth century. Of these 30,000 were Germans and 13,000 or 14,000 were Belgians. The number of foreign immigrants about balanced that of Dutch emigrants, an average of 4,000 annually.

This steadily increasing population had to find employment within the narrow boundaries of the Netherlands. Of the arable soil 33 percent was pasture land, 23 percent cultivated and, in 1833, 27 percent fallow. After fifty years that last percentage was reduced to 21, much of the land remaining uncultivated being barren. In 1849, the Netherlands with its 230 inhabitants to the square mile, was already one of the most densely populated areas in Europe. Before the end of the century this figure rose to 380. Commerce, shipping, and industry had to be increased to provide employment. In the middle of the century nearly one-third of the population lived by agriculture and cattle-raising. This proportion could not be maintained

with the steadily rising birth rate. New drainage works could give little and only temporary relief. Between 1815 and 1840, 68,000 acres of land were won by dyking-in and drainage. In the next twenty-five years the total rose to more than 150,000 acres, including the land reclaimed in 1852 by drainage of the Haarlemmermeer, the 79,000-acre inland sea south of Haarlem.

The 1840's saw a deep depression in Netherland agriculture. After 1850 a steady rise of prices brought relief to the peasantry; but the absence of any surplus arable soil obliged shipping and industry to absorb the excess of available labor. But shipping and industry were so backward that competition with foreign countries seemed impossible. In Britain and other countries, sailing vessels were being rapidly replaced by steamships, but in the Netherlands only one ship out of a hundred was a steamer. Industry was wholly dependent upon the outside world for raw materials. The cotton manufacturers of Overijssel could not compete with British producers. During the period of the Culture System the import of Netherland cotton goods into the Indies declined, while that of British goods increased. Even the fisheries, the original source of Netherland prosperity, were affected by the general depression. Many cumbersome regulations dating from the Middle Ages prevented this branch of industry from regaining its former prosperity. Even when ships entered Dutch ports (not without difficulty because of their condition) transportation inland was lacking because railroads had not been developed. The *trekschuit*, the river-steamer, the mail coach seemed good enough in a country where distances were so short.

Under these circumstances the mass of the people had little to expect. Wages of one guilder a day were normal, as was the exploitation of child labor. The hardships of the laboring class were simply ignored by the self-satisfied bourgeoisie. There was still plenty of capital in the Netherlands, but little spirit of enterprise among the middleclass. Inertia and tradition militated against economic progress. In the years around 1850 the Netherland State was unable to make ends meet without revenues from Java. In 1849 the Netherland budget in Europe was a little more than 70,000,000 guilders. Netherland taxpayers provided 50,000,000, the Indies 20,000,000. As a contemporary said, the Indies were "the cork that kept the Netherlands afloat." Taxation amounted to 17 guilders per head of the population and its incidence was such that it was almost equally divided among all citizens, poor or rich. Twenty-eight millions obtained through indirect taxes and excise placed a burden of forty or fifty guilders annually on a working class family. Such conditions obliged poor parents to send their children to work, regardless of other considerations. Of the 70,000,000 guilders collected from all sources, fifty percent was spent on the interest and sinking



fund of the national debt. Another 18,000,000 were spent for defense, one-third on the navy and two-thirds on the army. The Department of the Interior, including Education, had to be satisfied with a meager four millions. The average income of teachers, as late as 1850, was 200 guilders a year, with free housing and profits from the sale of books and writing material to the pupils.

The Netherland intellectuals of 1850 looked to the past. They were satisfied to belong to the nation of Vondel, of Cats, of Rembrandt, of Michiel de Ruyter, of John De Witt. Painters studied their XVIIth century models with care, and too often merely imitated them. Writers composed historical novels about the Golden Age and the heroic fight against Spain. Everard Potgieter, by far the most talented writer of the period, vainly sought to re-awaken the Netherland intellectual world by contrasting the self-satisfied mediocrity of his time to the greatness of the Golden Age. He withdrew from literary activity for many years in disappointment. Other men of outstanding talent and originality, Conrad Busken Huet and Edward Douwes Dekker, could find no place in Netherland society. A number of medieval monuments were destroyed to make way for structures with no character of their own. And everywhere ancient city walls were torn down to be replaced by neat little parks and boulevards where the burgher paraded his smugness on Sunday afternoons. No real change occurred until 1870.

Intellectual life was as dull as economic conditions were difficult in the years between 1848 and 1870. Yet, at that very time the foundations of the political organization of the Netherland nation were being laid. The constitutional revision of 1848 shifted the center of political gravity from the Crown to the States General. It also revived the democratic trend of 1795 by transferring the election of members of the Second Chamber from the Provincial States to the people. The First Chamber, formerly appointed by the king, was now elected by the Provincial States from the wealthiest citizens. This form of election to the First Chamber was the only concession made to provincial traditions; in all other matters the autonomy of the provinces was restricted. The new constitution made ministers responsible to Parliament, but nowhere provided that to appear and speak there ministers should be members. This was an important difference from the British system. It permitted the appointment to the Cabinet of eminent specialists, who had never taken part in political life. It also permitted the formation of extra-parliamentary cabinets, which did not start with majority support, but through their administration hoped to secure a majority for each individual measure on its merits. These extra-parliamentary cabinets became quite a feature of Netherland political life. King Wil-

liam III had recourse to this means to preserve direct influence over the administration of the country. Later, in the XXth century, when the splitting-up of political parties rendered the formation of a majority block impossible, extra-parliamentary cabinets were the only possible solution.

The Liberals, who before 1849 only formed a small group in the Netherlands, had seen their political aspirations materialize under the influence of events abroad—the revolutions in France and in Germany. Once they had achieved their aims, they found wide support among the franchise-holders. Again it must be emphasized that the franchise was restricted to a small fraction of the population; even after the passing of the electoral law, which granted votes to taxpayers assessed for a certain amount, the electorate was only three and a half percent of the population, or about 100,000 voters. However, thanks to the Liberal reform, a new class of society gained control of public affairs. Once more in Netherland history, the middleclass supplanted the aristocracy. In 1572, middleclass men, Calvinists for the most part, had thrown the Burgundian-Habsburg oligarchy out of office, only to become oligarchs themselves. They were attacked by the middleclass in 1747 and in 1784, and thrown out in 1795. Hogendorp had contemplated restoring the former oligarchy in 1814; and although he did not succeed, it regained at least part of its power by entering the service of King William I. In 1848 the burgher class again attacked the existing aristocracy, entrenched behind the monarchy, and succeeded in gaining control. Fifty years later, the lower middleclass was to begin its attack on the democrats of 1848, and the struggle between these two groups formed the background of internal political developments until 1940. The upper classes first resisted the Liberal middleclass, to join it later when the pressure from below increased by the labor element drove the middleclass to the conservative side in politics.

The political struggle of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries was continued into the XIXth. The connection is clearly visible and can be traced even in the political conflicts of the last few decades. Dutch Liberals of the 1850's and '60's were not an organized political party in our sense of the word. They were merely a group of individuals having certain opinions in common, who fought their electoral campaigns individually and presented a common front in parliament on questions of principle. There was no regular party leadership, at most only an understanding among prominent Liberals. But the Liberals were infinitely better organized than their opponents, who were merely individuals with conservative views, most of them without well-defined political programs of their own. This reflects a very similar political division in the time of the Republic. If the opponents of Oldenbarnevelt and John De Witt had not found a rallying point

in the House of Orange, they would never have had a chance against the oligarchy. Much the same thing occurred in the middle of the XIXth century. Against the Liberals were the Conservatives who simply abhorred the idea of giving political influence to "the mob." Against them, were a number of Calvinists who, as in 1618, though on less dogmatic grounds, opposed complete religious equality. The reorganization of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands and the re-establishment of episcopal sees, vacant since 1572 or 1579, aroused a storm which forced the Liberals out of the administration. The Liberals were also opposed, if not by the Crown, at least by the personal sentiment of King William III. Without his help, the motley conservative group would not have stood a chance.

There is no better proof of this than the experience of Groen van Prinsterer, the only man who had the intelligence, the knowledge, and the conviction to create a Conservative party with a program based on well-considered principles. For many years Director of the Archives of the Royal Family, he started the publication of a long series of volumes, the "Archives or unpublished correspondence of the House of Orange-Nassau," which proved an invaluable source for Netherland historians. Groen applied the principles of Bilderdijk, though with far greater objectivity. To him as to Bilderdijk, the theory of the "sovereignty of the people" was abhorrent because revolutionary and conducive to mob rule. In his interpretation of Netherland history he saw the House of Orange, defenders of Calvinist freedom and rights of established social groups, as predestined to monarchy, finally attained in the person of William I. He saw the Netherlands as a Calvinist State, the religious character of which should be maintained as a source of national existence. From a dogmatic point of view he rejected sovereignty of the people as being based on the anti-religious, rationalist philosophy of the XVIIIth century. God, not the people, was sovereign. The law of God revealed in Christian doctrine assigned to each individual his rights and his duties. Only a political order based upon divine law can endure. Sovereignty of the people means the tyranny of the majority, a "totalitarian" regime that ignores the fundamental rights and duties of man. Groen's political program was no platform, it was a creed. Principles rather than aims were expressed in the name of his party: the Anti-Revolutionary Party, anti-revolutionary standing for anti-Rousseau, anti-rationalist.

Groen found but few adherents. His abstract theological-political ideals did not appeal to the burgher class. He could not rally the Conservatives around him, for the upper classes generally did not share his convictions, and the masses who had participated in the anti-Catholic movement of 1853, were more against what was unusual than in favor of any definite

theological or political principle. Yet Groen inaugurated a new chapter in Netherland politics. His method of approach to political problems was adopted by the majority of party leaders in the later part of the century, and his basing of political opinion on more fundamental considerations of creed and philosophy was followed so rigorously that by the second decade of the XXth century political and religious divisions in the Netherlands ran largely parallel.

In one point of his historical interpretation of national policy, Groen was definitely mistaken. This was his view of the origin of the Netherland nation. Not only did he ignore all national development before the Great Revolt but he made this Revolt and with it the nation, dependent on the Calvinist struggle. That is why he saw its Calvinism as its basic trait. The declaration of freedom of 1581 however assigned political and not religious reasons for the revolt, and the *Haec Libertatis Ergo* of the beleaguered town of Leiden professed the same motives. Not Groen van Prinsterer but the Liberals represented the tradition of 1572.

The political leader of the Liberals was John Rudolf Thorbecke, a true representative of the burgher class that now came to power. He was the son of a tobacconist of Zwolle in Overijssel, and by energy and intelligence he succeeded in completing his studies at Leiden University. They were followed by a trip through Germany, where he visited numerous universities. About the middle of the XIXth century Dutch learned circles were impressed by the scientific innovations made in German universities and the methodical results obtained there. Philology, theology, philosophy and history borrowed heavily from German sources. Thorbecke fell under this influence which helped him to give to Netherland constitutional practices, adapted from English and French models, a character of their own. His biographers have noted strong romantic traits in his apparently cool and calculating character. Von Savigny's historical political philosophy, of which he learned through Eichhorn, made a deep impression on him. In the first years after his return to the Netherlands his scientific interest shifted from philosophy to history, then to the science of government, and finally to politics. He was the first to give clear expression to Liberal wishes in regard to constitutional reforms, and to him King William II entrusted the chairmanship of the Committee appointed to revise the Constitution. His prestige among the Liberals made his leadership inevitable, whatever the personal feelings of the monarch.

Leadership in a Netherland cabinet could rest only on personal qualities. The Constitution did not provide for a Premiership like later the constitution of France and like political tradition in Britain. The "Council of Ministers" decided matters of general policy, and the presidency of the Council

changed periodically. Such "government by council" was well suited to Netherland tradition, but made strong administration more difficult. The constitutional practice inaugurated by Thorbecke, permits the statesman who forms the Cabinet to retain a position slightly superior to his colleagues, but all attempts to make this tacitly acknowledged leadership official have so far been defeated in parliament. Thorbecke formed three Liberal Cabinets. The last time he took office he was a dying man. But in the two preceding administrations and by his leadership of the Liberal Party, he created the Netherland parliamentary system of government. The laws implementing certain provisions of the constitution were promulgated under his administration. He created the provincial and communal governments. He showed how the franchise was to be extended, by including all who could possibly be given the right to vote; that representation should be as democratic as circumstances permitted. He created new economic opportunities by making new entrances to the ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam from the sea. He made the Netherlands a free-trade area. He put an end to long discussions of the problem of slavery by forcing Parliament to accept abolition. For the burgher class he created advanced schools, similar to American high schools, where middleclass children could receive the education they would need in industry and trades. Nearly all of his creations survive with only a few essential modifications. In opposition, he succeeded in putting an end to royal interference in elections and in conflicts between ministers and parliament, by insisting on the observance of constitutional methods. No wonder his opponents, especially the rank and file of old-fashioned traditionalists, held the fate of Oldenbarnevelt and John De Witt up to him as a warning! Finally, by his example, he educated his followers to independent political thinking, which inevitably led the younger generation away from him towards more progressive ideals.

This split in the Liberal ranks first became apparent when the East Indian administration was up for discussion. Thorbecke, who put practical solutions before his own predilection, did not believe the time "ripe" for a sweeping reform of the system of government controlled agriculture in Java. He needed the revenue from Batavia for public works in Europe, especially the construction of railroads. But reform could not long be postponed. Van Hoevell kept hammering at the evils of the Culture System and the corruption it produced. Public opinion was aroused by Edward Douwes Dekker, a former official of the East Indian government who in 1859 under the pseudonym of Multatuli ("I suffered much") published his *Max Havelaar*, a fiery accusation of the East Indian regime. This book was the first really vibrant literary production to appear in the Nether-

lands after a century of dullness. It was widely read, but not believed. After others had convinced the thinking public of the errors of the East Indian administration and had secured its reform, *Max Havelaar* was given credit for the reform. Douwes Dekker left the Netherlands and wandered through Europe, publishing violent attacks on conservatism, on established institutions and on the creed of the masses. His work remained fragmentary. He wanted to picture "the struggle between low and high, between nobleness of soul and scoundrelism." "Away with coziness, with simplicity and sweetness of mind," was his battle-cry. By a fatal over-estimation of his own work and personality, Douwes Dekker could "sound the trumpet" for the attack but could never lead it. Nevertheless he foreshadowed things to come. Isaac Fransen van der Putte, one of the younger generation of Liberals held the office of Minister of Colonies in Thorbecke's second administration. He advocated a complete reversal of East Indian policy, which led to such dissension among the Liberal majority that Thorbecke was forced to resign. Van der Putte embarked on his reforms, but the power of the Liberal Party had been temporarily broken. The cleavage in the Liberal Party offered the king a last opportunity to attempt monarchical rule. After it was defeated the problem of the Indies was revived again.

Within twenty years Netherland public opinion had changed greatly. Around 1850, Van Hoevell could hardly mention odd sounding Javanese names without provoking laughter among the less intelligent of the dignified members of Parliament. In 1869 and 1870 the discussion of agrarian reform in Java revealed a thorough study of the subject, and many members of Parliament proved to be well acquainted with the facts. The result was a highly interesting debate that ended in a compromise which proved to be one of the wisest of Dutch parliamentary decisions. All compulsory production was abolished, and the Indies were thrown open to private enterprise. To prevent the poor Javanese peasantry from being reduced to pauperism by western greed, the ownership of the soil was to be determined according to native customary law, which did not permit non-members of Indonesian village communities to acquire title to cultivated land or to wild land in the vicinity of the villages. Jungle lands in uninhabited territory, mostly outside of Java, were declared government property to be leased under long term contracts. The agrarian law of 1870 has been most beneficial to the people of the Indies by protecting the property rights of the small peasants, who make up 90 percent of the population. East Indian problems proved more susceptible to happy compromise than the political issues of the home country. Around 1870 a new political division occurred which for the time being weakened the existing parties, without

offering any new possibility of majority rule. The Conservative Party, reduced to a handful of members, was resigned to constitutional monarchy, but feared that "progress might be too fast." It could not possibly influence affairs. The party had indeed no reason for existence after it ceased to express any political conviction. Some of the Liberals satisfied with the existing system of government and afraid of "mob rule" if the franchise were extended further, voted with the Conservatives in Parliament and helped to defeat a number of bills. But beyond voting down government measures they were unable to accomplish anything. The defection of this unprogressive group was not the worst blow the Liberal movement suffered in these years. The fate of the Liberal movement was decided by the defection of its Catholic supporters.

The Roman Catholics had strongly supported the Patriot movement in 1780 and 1795. Thanks to the reforms of the French period, they had become full citizens of the Netherland state. Obviously, their interest demanded that they support the Liberals despite the deep gulf between the Catholic creed and the religious neutrality of Thorbecke and his adherents. There were times when the great Liberal leader could obtain a seat in Parliament only by running in a predominantly Catholic constituency. Liberals and Catholics had jointly opposed the policies of Groen van Prinsterer. Neither group would recognize Groen's claim that the Netherlands were a Calvinist state, born of a Calvinist movement, with its freedom anchored in Calvinist doctrine. But their negative cooperation was obviously bound to collapse whenever a positive policy was opposed to Groen's ideas.

The break occurred over the question of education. Groen had demanded that the state, being Calvinist, provide public education on a Reformed basis. In his view the existing regulations under which only public schools were supported by the state, and Calvinist teaching of religion and history was forbidden, "paved the way for Roman Catholic penetration." A return to the educational monopoly of the Dutch Reformed Church was impossible, nor did Groen desire such reversion to the past. He did not expect a religious revival from outward institutions, but only from the spirit. The fact that forty percent of the Netherland people did not belong to the Reformed Church or to any Calvinist organization, had obviously to be taken into account. Groen's ideal was that the state should maintain separate schools for Catholics and Israelites wherever required, and that education in all other public schools should be either based explicitly on the Reformed dogma or strongly imbued with Calvinist historical tradition. This system was acceptable neither to the Liberals nor to the Catholics. But here agreement ceased between these two sections of the Liberal party.

*In principle*, the Catholics were as much opposed to the existing school

system as Groen van Prinsterer, but they wanted freedom to establish their own denominational schools and have them subsidized from the public funds. Their main argument seemed irrefutable: education being the exclusive concern of the state and paid for by the taxpayer's money, ought to be organized according to the taxpayer's wishes. Groen and the Catholic leaders claimed that more than sixty percent of the people disliked the existing system, but could not express their wishes because they did not have the franchise. The *voting* population, the Liberal-minded bourgeoisie, was quite satisfied with the existing education and refused to consider the opinions of the religious groups. A peculiar situation had now developed. Groen, who demanded a denominational school system on the basis of the nation's historical tradition and religious convictions, could not appeal to the nation as a whole. That would have required the extension of the franchise to artisans, shopkeepers, and peasants, and the leader of the anti-revolutionary party opposed democracy on principle. His Liberal opponents who favored democracy on principle, refused to heed to the will of the people on education. They were so fully convinced that they were right in this regard that they planned to use the existing school system to educate the people towards their views. A contradiction such as existed in both political groups between means and aims could only spell catastrophe.

The first to profit from this confusion were the Catholics. This group of Netherlanders had so long lived on sufferance, in political and cultural obscurity, that the majority of the people was firmly convinced that no further contribution to intellectual life could spring from Catholic sources. A certain type of popular literature and history fostered this belief. This general prejudice materially hampered cultural activity among the Dutch Catholics. When William Nuyens, the son of a physician in West Friesland, desired to study history, he was first obliged to become a physician to provide himself with independent means, and then while carrying on his practice, to take up historical research which made him one of the leaders of the Catholic revival. So Catholics in the XIXth century Netherlands continued to work under conditions that had been almost universal two hundred years before. They wrote, studied history and art, edited newspapers and other publications, while earning their living as booksellers, physicians, or in some other profession. Nuyens was a physician and an historian; the bookseller A. J. Alberdingk Thijm became an outstanding art critic and revived the glory of Vondel, himself a poet and shopkeeper.

France strongly influenced Catholic cultural life. Many Catholics read and admired the works of Montalembert who sought a reconciliation between Catholicism and Liberal principles of government; but Louis Veuilot, the leader of the Ultramontane Catholic faction, wielded far wider and



more lasting influence. Under his influence a change, in many respects regrettable, took place. Dutch Catholics turned from more liberal to strictly ultramontane views. Deprived of their civic rights for centuries and regarded with some suspicion by the authorities in the first half of the XIXth century, Dutch Catholics considered themselves bound to display excessive zeal in defense of the rights of the Church, whether essential or not, as for instance the temporal power of the Pope. At times the spirit of the Crusades seemed revived. In proportion to its population, the Netherlands provided more volunteers for the Papal army in 1864, than any other nation. More than five thousand young men left for Italy, where many participated in the battle of Mentana. Not unnaturally, this Ultramontane enthusiasm was intolerant of Catholics who did not fully share all the political views of the leaders.

Between this Catholic reaction and the Liberals, all cooperation was impossible, and events in Italy between 1864 and 1870 caused a definite break between the former allies in Dutch politics. Pope Pius IX condemned Liberalism in 1864 in his encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus* that accompanied it. The Dutch Liberals rejoiced over the destruction of the Papal state. Imprudently and gratuitously the Liberal majority in Parliament decided to express its satisfaction with this event by abolishing Dutch diplomatic representation at the Vatican. The Catholics resisted the motion furiously but vainly. From that time on the Dutch Legation at the Vatican became an internal political issue of curious significance, quite out of proportion to its diplomatic importance.

The Ultramontane trend among Dutch Catholics, expressed in the panegyric literature of Herman Schaepman, priest and professor of Church history in the archdiocese of Utrecht, did not neutralize another and stronger Catholic aspiration, that of becoming full members of the greater Netherlands community. Whatever the intention of the author, Groen's interpretation of Dutch history placed them beyond the pale. The interpretation of Robert Fruin, leading Liberal historian, left them in the position of converts who had sinned both against the nation and the most sacred principles of freedom and tolerance. Against these writers, William Nuyens defended a new Catholic interpretation of the Great Revolt in which he claimed for his co-religionists of the XVIth century, a place among the defenders of freedom equal to that of the Calvinists and Erasmusians. The literary controversy around the history of the Great Revolt grew into a political struggle, when the tricentenary of the capture of Brill by the Sea Beggars was celebrated in 1872.

These conflicts of historical opinion may seem irrelevant to the development of the Netherlands nation. Yet they do help to explain the political

confusion of the period from 1870 to 1890, when a clear majority could rarely be found in parliament to support any administration. Extra-parliamentary cabinets or opportunist combinations had to be resorted to, and the development of parliamentary life on the British model was prevented. Moreover, these conflicting trends gain deeper significance when we compare them with certain statistics of Church membership. At the middle of the century the Reformed Church claimed more than 54% of the Dutch people as members. By 1899 its membership had dropped to 48.5% of the population. By 1920 it was reduced to 41.6% and by 1930 its position as the most numerous religious denomination in the Netherlands had been lost to the Roman Catholic Church. The latter claimed 36% of the population in 1930. Half of them were in the provinces of Brabant and Limburg, which were 95% and 98% Catholic. The change in religious trend is made even more clear by the following figures: from 1869 to 1930 the total population of the Netherlands increased 121.7% and the total membership of the Dutch Reformed Church, only 39.6%. This discrepancy was only partly offset by the growth of the minor Calvinist denominations, for even including them, the increase of the combined Calvinist Churches amounted only to 75%, lagging far behind the population growth. The Roman Catholics with an increase of 120% in total membership in the same sixty years suffered only a slight loss. The proportional strength of the other Protestant denominations, Lutherans and Baptists, also showed a decline of about 50%, but the number of their adherents was extremely small to begin with. The most important factor in this development was the natural increase in the proportion of the population belonging to no Church or religious organization, from virtually zero in 1869 to 2.3% in 1899 and to 13% in 1930.

If we bear in mind that membership in an established Church is often a matter of social tradition, it is evident that Groen's ideal of the Netherlands as a Calvinist state did not respond to reality, and that the popular trend was in the opposite direction. It is also evident that confidence must have grown among the Catholics with their increasing proportional strength. New leaders, unwilling to follow in the wake of Liberal policy, were certain to find a response among the masses of Catholics. Calvinist leaders bent on reviving the reformed religion had no choice but to break away from the traditionalism of the Dutch Reformed Church and appeal to the masses of peasants and small burghers who were still actively attached to the creed of their ancestors. Leaders on both sides had to liberalize their movements, a decision which shocked their old followers perhaps more than their opponents. In both Calvinist and Catholic camps leaders recognized the danger of the incipient irreligious trend. Anxious to pre-

serve the religious character of the nation, they had to go to the people before the masses were captured by other and perhaps anti-religious movements.

The Calvinists were more easily democratized than the Catholics. The latter had few capable leaders. The clergy were excluded by the traditional conservatism of the Catholic Church, and among the laity an intellectual class hardly existed. The Catholic gentry of the provinces of Brabant and Limburg and the industrialists of Tilburg in Brabant or Maastricht in Limburg leaned strongly towards Liberalism. In 1880, the Catholics found their first political leader in Herman Schaepman from Overijssel. But for many years Schaepman stood virtually alone among Catholics as a defender of democracy. His co-religionists supported him in asserting the right to denominational schools and on other general issues; they deserted him time and again when he spoke for democracy. His leadership was recognized and his ideals accepted only after his death.

Among the Calvinists the role of democratic leader fell to Abraham Kuyper, a minister of the Church who had turned from modernist views to orthodoxy. Kuyper could work on a far broader basis than Schaepman, for he included as the objects of democratization both the Church and the political party. He led orthodox Calvinists in an attack on the established Reformed Church and founded the Christian Reformed Churches, in which the individual congregations were to have complete autonomy. Half a million members of the Reformed Church went over to the new congregations. Kuyper appealed to the "small people" not to tolerate the "ecclesiastical and political tyranny of a privileged oligarchy," by which he meant the prosperous, Liberal burgher class. Through masterful leadership he worked up an enthusiasm which in a few years made him the most prominent political figure of the country. He completely transformed the small intellectual group organized by Groen into a mass movement with slogans, popular campaigns, and party publications. His ideal was a total rebirth. Not only the political predominance of the Liberals, but also their intellectual monopoly was to be broken. Kuyper demonstrated the power of democracy when, with donations from the poor, he founded a university to give his co-religionists intellectual and spiritual leaders. The money was collected in scores of thousands of small gifts, a few guilders, a few dimes, sometimes a few cents. Many universities have been endowed by millionaires who have hardly missed the millions they bestowed on their foundations. Very few owe their existence, as did Kuyper's foundation, to the masses.

A new era had dawned in the history of the second Netherland state. The thoughts of Netherlanders no longer turned to the past, but to the

future. In literature, in art, in science, the nation regained some of its past glory, not by imitation but by initiative. The revival of letters, of which Douwes Dekker and Busken Huet had been the heralds, began around 1880. First English romanticism, then French naturalism inspired this new literature. French influences also strongly influenced the revival of painting. But as in politics, both these arts soon manifested tendencies towards democracy and new social conceptions. The individualists who dominated literature around 1880 soon made way for the preachers of new social gospels. And in the world of painting, Vincent Van Gogh pictured the people as he saw them, without romanticism or sentimentality but with shocking directness that cried aloud for change.

Some reformers believed that the creation of a better world demanded a total break with tradition. A "Society for the Propagation of Atheism," founded in Amsterdam (*De Dageraad*), caused a stir in the conventional Dutch world. Its effect was not very great, but it was connected with the first Marxist movement in the Netherlands. A Dutch section of the first International was founded in 1869, but gained only a handful of adherents from the laboring class. Revolutionary trends were still abhorrent to the working class, and the first Trade Unions, organized in 1866 and backed by younger members of the Liberal Party, were moderate in their aims and methods. The backwardness of Dutch industry did not provide great chances for the new General Workingmen's Federation formed by the Unions.

But after 1860 industry began to expand rapidly. Eastern Overijssel developed its cotton manufactures, which found a ready market in the Indies after the abolition of the Culture System. Tilburg in Brabant, which had inherited the wool industry of Leiden, became another important center, and Maastricht in Limburg further developed its ceramic industry. In all these industrial centers workers lived under pitiful conditions, which prompted some of the younger Liberals to broaden their political and social activities to include the cause of the common man. One of these younger Liberals, Samuel van Houten, was the first to present a bill to restrict child labor. It was adopted in 1874, the first Dutch social legislation.

Thus around 1880 the three major political groups in the Netherlands were feeling their way towards democracy. In each of these three groups a conservative section resented the democratic tendencies of the new leaders. Two of the three, the Anti-Revolutionaries and the Liberals were political parties, while the third group, the Catholics, had only formed a defensive front against the educational policy of the Liberals. Catholic leaders were still debating the advisability of a Catholic Party. Theoretically cooperation among the progressive elements of the three groups was pos-

sible. Had it been realized, a two-party system might have resulted. Practically, cooperation was impossible because of the overshadowing educational question. The denominational groups closed ranks as soon as the problem of equality for denominational schools arose. This is not so strange; but it is remarkable that the Liberals, for whom the maintenance of the public schools in a privileged position could hardly have been a matter of principle, stubbornly refused to reconsider their attitude, and also drew up in battle formation whenever this palladium of Liberal tradition was threatened. The idea that by compromising on this point they might attract the social-minded and democratic elements of the Catholic group and perhaps prevent the splitting up of the Dutch nation into political parties corresponding to religious tenets, seems never to have occurred to the younger Liberals. The expansion of such denominational parties is naturally limited, but they have a firm hold on their followers and can only with difficulty be supplanted.

Discussions of the school system in 1879 broadened the gap between the denominational and the Liberal groups. The result was the "monstrous alliance" of Catholics and Calvinists against their common opponent. Within thirty years of the popular unrest of an Anti-Popery campaign caused by Catholic bishops taking up residence in the Netherlands, this seemed hardly credible. For a while the new allies showed distrust of each other, but with the passage of time their bonds became stronger. This alliance was beneficial in that it bridged an old antagonism that had been strong enough to split up the Burgundian Lowland state three hundred years before. The wars of religion were buried. But it doomed the political basis of the Constitution of 1848.

Parliament, instead of being composed of two political parties with alternative majorities, became to some extent representative of religious communities. The educational problem not only diverted political development from its natural course, but also split the new labor movement. The General Workmen's Association, created with the assistance of Liberal leaders, advocated Liberal ideas on education. The immediate effect was the resignation of many members who in politics belonged to the Anti-Revolutionary Party. The Catholics lagged behind in labor unionism. A few leaders, among whom Alphonse Ariens, a priest in the textile district of Overijssel, was the most outstanding character, sought to create a Christian workingmen's movement; but the rank and file of the *voting* Catholics were far too conservative to approve, and the clergy, if not opposed to the new idea, were generally hesitant. They followed the lead of the Protestants in forming their own Unions on a denominational basis when Marxism returned to the field and the first Socialist leaders began a feverish agita-

tion to organize the working class as a combat force against capitalism.<sup>57</sup>

A leading position among the Marxists was held by Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, a former Lutheran minister, who had left the Church and turned to radicalism. His ardent wish to work for the poor and his individualism, which resented all political or ecclesiastical ties, drove him from the pulpit to the dwellings of the poor, where he preached Socialism, as he conceived Christ to have preached the Gospel of brotherly love. He believed in revolution and despised politics. His Socialism was a creed, the only possible reasonable creed, and he broke with fellow Socialists rather than sacrifice the slightest of his beliefs. Preaching a new creed, he clashed with the defenders of other creeds, but most of all with tradition. His Social Democratic Society separated from the General Workingmen's Association and formed the first Marxist party in the Netherlands. In the years around 1880 a severe crisis ruined Dutch agriculture. The countryside of Friesland and the peat districts of Groningen and Drente were especially hard hit. The farmers of Friesland and the peat diggers of Groningen enthusiastically welcomed Nieuwenhuis, as a prophet of paradise. Against his attacks on accepted religion and established order, Protestant and Catholic workers rallied around their own leaders. By 1890 the working class, like the political world, was divided into numerous groups, some denominational, some a-religious, some anti-religious. This lasted until 1940 and, as far as we can judge, may revive again after the liberation of the Netherlands.

Many Netherlanders have deplored this division of the nation along religious lines, and superficial observers have blamed the ecclesiastical die-hards for making all other issues subservient to that of education. But there was no reason why, while the Liberals persisted in their educational views, their opponents should abandon theirs. For a nation to believe that the education is of paramount public interest is not a sign of political incapacity—it marks progress beyond the political squabbles of the XVIIIth century and does not compare unfavorably with the politics of any of the adjacent great powers. Their thoroughness and insistence in discussing the fundamental principles rather than the superficial aspects of a problem were characteristic of the strong religious convictions of the Dutch people. This tendency was not always congenial to parliamentary methods of administration, but as it required each member of the community to account to himself for his political actions it was essentially democratic. In fact, it has proved the main bulwark of the Netherland nation against Nazi indoctrination.

The worst effect of this political system was that groups having common principles divided on secondary issues, while a general re-grouping on

new lines remained as impossible as ever. This was the case in the middle nineties, when the proposed extension of the franchise tore both the Liberal and the Anti-Revolutionary parties apart. The more conservative Anti-Revolutionaries formed the Christian Historical Party; the more progressive Liberals formed the Free-Democratic Group. There was no possibility of re-grouping the more Conservative Liberals and more liberal Anti-Revolutionaries in a new conservative front. The Social Democratic group also fell apart over a similar issue. Nieuwenhuis was adamant in the ideal of revolution; in 1894 the majority of the Socialists led by Pieter Jelles Troelstra, formed the Social Democratic Labor Party and plunged into parliamentary activity and the struggle for universal suffrage. Even the Catholic Party might have been divided as only its leader Schaepman defended democracy; but behind him was the authority of Rome. In 1891 Pope Leo XIII had pronounced the condition of the working man to be of great concern to all followers of the Church, thus breaking with the conservatism of the older generation of the clergy.

Pressure by all democratic elements in the various parties brought about a gradual extension of the franchise. In 1870 there were only 100,000 voters in a population of 3,500,000. Tax qualifications restricted the number of franchise holders to about 12% of the male population above the age of twenty-five. A constitutional revision in 1887 broadened the franchise by granting the right to vote to men with certain educational qualifications, at the same time lowering the tax qualification. A law of 1896 redrafted these qualifications and the number of voters in 1900 amounted to 570,000 out of a population of 5,200,000, or about 49% of the male population above the age limit. Prosperity and intellectual progress in the next ten years increased this to 63%, but also intensified the demand for universal suffrage. Only general trends in modern Dutch economic life can be indicated here; other books, recently published in the United States have devoted long chapters to the revival of Dutch prosperity after 1870 and especially after 1900.<sup>58</sup> Trade with Germany assumed a new aspect after the establishment of the German empire in 1870. The huge industrial development of the Ruhr basin revived the transit trade along the Rhine. Rotterdam became the principal port of the Netherlands. The merchant fleet of Amsterdam remained not far below that of its southern competitor, but the tonnage handled in Rotterdam far surpassed that of the northern port. Amsterdam retained a large share in the East Indian trade. The former residences of its merchant kings, the stately houses along its canals, became the home offices of numerous East Indian enterprises. After the abolition of the Culture System, an ever-growing influx of Dutch capital into the Indies gave the overseas territories an entirely new significance for the

Netherlands. The sugar production of Java, which rose from 150,000 to 380,000 tons within fifteen years, and to 1,400,000 tons, forty-four years after the abolition of the Culture System, was financed wholly by Dutch capital. The same was true of the tea and quinine plantations. The British had only a minor share in tobacco production. Rubber was not produced in quantity until after the First World War. The only branch of East Indian production financed from the first by international capital were the oil fields of Sumatra and Borneo, opened in 1889.

Though Netherland investments in the Indies were considerable, those in the United States were not much less important. Dutch capital had large interests in American railroads, especially west of the Mississippi and in Illinois and Wisconsin. It is impossible even to guess the amount invested in this way after 1860. Another favorite investment was in mortgage banks that provided capital to farmers both in Canada and in the western United States. Later, large numbers of shares in American oil companies, in steel works, and in automobile factories were bought by holding companies in Amsterdam. Dealings in American shares were a most important feature on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange. In 1939, Dutch investments in the United States were estimated at \$600,000,000.<sup>59</sup> This would indicate that Netherland investments in the United States were slightly larger than those in industrial and agricultural enterprises in the Indies. A few figures illustrating the increase of deposits in savings banks may also be given, as they indicate the prosperity of the masses. In 1860, there were 136 savings banks in the Netherlands, with total deposits amounting to 5,500,000 guilders. In 1900, there were 252 privately owned savings banks besides the Government Postal Savings Banks, and deposits had risen to 164,500,000 guilders. Ten years later the total sum was 275,000,000 guilders. After the First World War it was nearly half a billion, and in 1937, nearly a billion guilders.

This increase in prosperity was matched by a new eclosion of cultural life, that has been described in recent publications in the United States.<sup>60</sup> Five Netherland physicists, among them the great Hendrik Anton Lorentz, were awarded the Nobel Prize. Johan Huizinga, the greatest of contemporary Dutch historians, gained wide renown. Johan Hendrik Kern became world famous for his knowledge of Sanskrit, Indonesian languages and Buddhism and restored the university of Leiden to its rank as a great center of oriental studies. Christian Snouck Hurgronje, who had attracted wide attention of students of Islam by his visit to Mecca in 1884—at a time when the intrusion of “Infidels” was likely to be punished by death—became a leading figure in Islamic studies and Indonesian ethnology. Cornelis van Vollenhoven, the interpreter of Indonesian *adat*-law, revived the



tradition of Grotius and won recognition as an outstanding authority in the field of international law. N. J. Krom brought the ancient and medieval history of the Indies to light from fragments of chronicles and from inscriptions. J. C. Kapteyn and W. De Sitter made Leiden a center of astronomical research, from which their students spread all over the world. There are few important observatories in the United States today where one of them is not to be found.

The Netherlands have not produced another painter of Van Gogh's stature but painting is studied widely and evokes more general interest than any other cultural activity. Another art which flourished was music. Progress since the early XIXth century was so great that in the first forty years of the XXth century Amsterdam became an "unique center of the musical world." After the last war architecture took a new turn with large rehousing projects in many cities, that gave the Netherlands a "garden city" aspect. Social reform had started late, but this was compensated by rapid improvement after the adoption of social laws promoted first by the younger Liberals and then under denominational auspices. By 1901, control over public affairs was definitely lost by the Liberals. The "Coalition" of Anti-Revolutionaries, Catholics, and the Christian-Historical Party, came to power after the first election of the XXth century, and Abraham Kuyper, anti-revolutionary leader, became "prime minister."<sup>61</sup> For once the use of this term is accurate. Kuyper sought to create a premiership which, until then was unknown to Dutch constitutional tradition. The new prime minister had already rendered immeasurable service to his followers and to the nation in general. He had brought the strictly orthodox Calvinist peasants and fishermen out of the cultural isolation into which they had withdrawn as a mistaken defense against modern trends of thought. He had brought the people of the remotest sections to participation in national political and cultural life. He had helped democracy to victory and he had helped to do away with one of the most disastrous divisions in the Netherlands, the antagonism of Calvinists and Catholics based on events that happened three hundred years before.

But as a national leader Kuyper was not a success. In politics he remedied only minor defects. Moreover, he had the bad luck of having to deal with the only extensive railroad strike that ever occurred in the Netherlands; and the way he handled it made his name hateful to the majority of workers. There had been no violence or excess of any sort, yet Kuyper had a law passed prohibiting future railroad strikes without providing the wages and working conditions asked by the leaders of the working class.

A new departure inspired by Kuyper's administration and proclaimed by the queen must be recorded. In her speech from the throne in Septem-

ber 1901, Queen Wilhelmina said in regard to the overseas territories, "The Netherlands have a moral duty to fulfill towards the people of the Indies." This declaration did not produce any immediate change in the Far East, but it was a principle that once established profoundly modified the relations between the component parts of the kingdom of the Netherlands. Liberal reform had abolished the Culture System, but hope had not been abandoned that the Indies would become sufficiently prosperous to permit excess public income to be transferred to the Netherlands without injury to the colonies. That hope had rapidly faded. The last revenue had been received in 1877. A war broke out in the Indies which taxed its resources to the utmost.

Under the treaty of 1824 with Britain the government of Batavia was obliged to suppress piracy in Sumatran waters, and decided to stop the constant raids of Achinese pirates by occupying Achin. It was believed that the sultan, one of the most powerful Indonesian princes, would acknowledge Dutch supremacy and assist in putting down piracy. The grave decision to attack Achin was prompted by fear that foreign powers might otherwise occupy the northern point of Sumatra and endanger the Dutch position in the Archipelago. War broke out in 1873. It was soon apparent that Achin could not easily be conquered, and that the eventual submission of its sultan would not end the conflict with other partisan leaders. Twenty years later during the administration of Kuyper fighting still continued. Hendrik Colijn, later minister and national leader, played an important part in the campaigns by which General Van Heutsz forced the last partisans to capitulate.

After this onerous war, no likelihood remained of renewed revenue from Batavia. Moreover, ideas on the subject had changed radically. Conrad Th. van Deventer, a former East Indian lawyer and financier, demanded the restitution of mopies taken from the Indies under the Culture System and outlined the new policy expressed in the declaration of 1901. If revenue could no longer be expected from Batavia, grants from Amsterdam to Batavia were now within the range of possibility. A first grant of forty million guilders—for the improvement of economic conditions in Java—was made in 1905, and in 1912 the complete financial separation of the East Indian and the European administrations was effected by law.

The new East Indian policy included the extension of Dutch administration to all areas within the boundaries of the empire as determined in the treaties with Great Britain of 1829 and 1871 and with Portugal—concerning Timor—of 1860. This strengthening of Dutch control was accompanied by a first attempt to organize a popular educational system. Public health measures were another aspect of the new political trend, which in Dutch

colonial history is known as the "ethical policy." It was a policy in which most Netherlanders concurred, irrespective of party. The Socialists, under the leadership of their colonial expert Henri van Kol, advocated even more radical reforms and immediate plans for self-government in the Indies.

The first half of the XXth century will be known in Dutch history as the age of Queen Wilhelmina. In 1890, after reigning forty-two years, King William III had died. Until her majority in 1898 his daughter reigned under the regency of her mother, Queen Emma. The outstanding political feature of the first decade of that period was the rapid rise of the Social Democratic movement in the form of a political party which consistently expressed revolutionary aims while showing a marked preference for gradual evolution. The German Socialist Party under the leadership of August Bebel was then the model for similar parties in all the states adjacent to Germany. Troelstra, the most prominent Dutch leader, was deeply impressed by the success of Socialist mass organization in Germany and by Eduard Bernstein's conceptions of revisionist Marxist Socialism. In his idealism he imagined that the fraternization of the working classes of Europe was near. Signs of internal dissension in his own party ought to have warned him, but he continued what seemed a triumphant progress until the war of 1914 completely disillusioned him and broke him physically.

In 1897 the Socialist Party had only two representatives in the Second Chamber. In 1901 there were four, and 39,000 voters supported this ticket. In 1905 the Socialist representatives had increased to seven, backed by 65,000 voters out of a total of 625,000. Ten percent of the franchise holders were already won over. The number of representatives remained stationary in the next election but popular support grew and, as a consequence, the election of 1913 brought the Socialists eighteen seats and made them one of the strongest groups in Parliament. In 1909 a rift in the Socialist ranks between the advocates of revolution and those of evolution led to the secession of a small group of radicals. This was the origin of the later Communist Party in the Netherlands. The new group included some of the best intellects of the party but very few of the rank and file.

Liberal and conservative cabinets alternated until 1917.<sup>62</sup> As long as the Liberal Party was represented in strength the orthodox parliamentary system worked fairly well. But with the last war came a wide change in political conceptions expressed in 1917, by a revision of the Constitution. Democracy triumphed. The last war brought more than an inner political reorientation; it brought the Netherlands back into world politics, from which for over eighty years they had tried to escape.

The history of Netherland foreign policy during the second half of the

XIXth century is easily written. Of this period an American historian said, "the Dutch developed the small power policy to a point little short of perfection. The determination of the Dutch to play a passive role in world politics was so strong as to amount almost to an obsession."<sup>63</sup> Historians obliged to describe Dutch foreign policy between 1840 and 1914, find difficulty in holding the attention of their readers so numerous are the "treaties of conciliation and arbitration." The ease with which these treaties were concluded, when war as an instrument of policy lay under no moral ban, shows that no important issue divided the Netherlands from any other State. There was still some resentment in Belgium over the Scheldt clauses of the treaty of 1839, but it never became dangerous. There was some anxiety in the Netherlands over irresponsible utterances by German historians who were inflated by Prussia's power and Bismarck's political successes. Heinrich von Treitschke, a prophet of Prussianism, devoted a number of his university lectures in 1869 to the history of the Netherlands and although he grudgingly admitted the existence of a historically determined Dutch nation, separated from Germany by natural causes, he made spiteful remarks on the arrogance of Grotius and the shopkeeper mentality of the Dutch, adding a few rhetorical threats to any who might dare to hamper the development of the new German State.<sup>64</sup>

The year in which these words were spoken gave them particular significance. In 1867 and 1868 King William III, as grand duke of Luxemburg, had become involved in a most unpleasant conflict between France and the new North German Confederation. The Netherlands themselves were not concerned. The problem was whether King William could sell to France his sovereignty over the grand duchy, which belonged to him *personally*. Such a sale, transferring a people without their consent to the allegiance of an alien power, is a dubious transaction in itself, but in 1867 nobody questioned King William's right to sell if he wished. The issue was that earlier agreements involved other powers, chiefly Prussia which still maintained a garrison in Luxemburg under the treaties of 1815. The negotiations between William, grand duke of Luxemburg and Napoleon III led to an international dispute which was settled by the mediation of Great Britain at a conference in London. King William withdrew his consent to the transfer of Luxemburg as soon as it became clear that such an action might lead to war.

Naturally, King William availed himself of the Netherland diplomatic service in the negotiations leading to the settlement of London; naturally, the Netherland Parliament was opposed to having the Netherlands involved in a dispute over Luxemburg. The opposition might have dropped

the matter had not a constitutional conflict already been in progress. The imprudence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs provided the opposition with an effective weapon against the cabinet and the foreign issue was made the occasion of an internal conflict.

This foreign incident marked a new high in the policy of passive neutrality. The policy of abstention practiced in preceding centuries by Amsterdam's merchants now became a sacred dogma. The arguments supporting it were new. XVIIth century neutrality had been defended on the ground that only when the vital interests of the Dutch nation (usually the commercial interests of the merchant class) were involved, was active participation in European politics justified. The XIXth century doctrine was based chiefly on the claim, "We are powerless anyway." The cult of passive neutrality reconciled the Dutch to political impotence. "Nations too weak to harm the interests of their neighbors are always prompted by noble motives." This became the gist of Dutch foreign policy in the XIXth century. There may be some doubt whether lack of military power is really synonymous with lofty ideals, but there can be no doubt about the peculiarly difficult position of the Netherlands. In the long run, it was this position that imposed modesty of aim and method, that fostered a deeper understanding of the problems of war and peace, of disarmament and international arbitration, than existed in many powerful states, where war was not without attractions until it became reality. Dutch studies of international relations were a natural continuation of the tradition handed down by Erasmus, Grotius and other Netherlanders. Because of them, The Hague was made the seat of two world conferences on disarmament, of the International Court of Arbitration, and later of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The Dutch people became accustomed to being spectators of world politics and they had a ringside seat in the European arena. Sometimes the action became so violent as to make this close vicinity rather uncomfortable, and the spectators restrained themselves with difficulty from rushing on the stage. This was the case in 1899, during the Boer War. The descendants of the Dutch colonists on the Cape had never valued their racial and linguistic ties with the Netherlands very highly. Reminiscences of the old days of the East India Company were not pleasant. The Boers had become complete "isolationists," culturally as well as politically. Relations between the orthodox Boers and the liberal Dutch Reformed Church had been infrequent and were intensified only after Kuyper's ecclesiastical reforms. But by 1885, when the Transvaal Republic, restored to independence by Gladstone, again felt the pressure of British imperialism and when

attempts to organize the republic into a well-administered state failed for lack of trained personnel and of capital, the Boers turned to the Netherlands for resources to offset British penetration.

When war broke out in 1899, the sympathy of all Netherlands without exception was with the Boers. With some this sympathy remained platonic, with others it flared into enthusiasm and a demand for intervention. The dividing line between these two groups coincides remarkably with that which two centuries previously had separated Oligarchs and Orangists. The Liberals, who were in power in 1899, strongly opposed anything beyond peaceful demonstrations of sympathy. They saw no Netherlands interest at stake in the South African conflict, and only grave risks to be incurred by antagonizing Great Britain, the one naval power able to injure Dutch interests in the Far East. Economic considerations outweighed sentimental affections. The opposition, the small burgher class who were largely enlisted in Kuyper's party, demanded action—not war, but emphatic intervention. This group expected the queen, animated by the traditions of the House of Orange, to take the lead. They hardly realized the risks involved in such a policy, but concentrated their resentment, religious, partisan, and national, against the more coolly calculating upper class.

The charge that the Liberals had deliberately left their South African brethren to their fate was a natural weapon in the election campaign of 1901.<sup>65</sup> But once the Liberals had been defeated and the leadership of the state had fallen to Kuyper, the interventionists quickly realized their impotence. Intervention was possible only in the form of a joint protest by many states as in 1863 against Russia in favor of the Polish insurgents. In 1900, no state wanted to be the first to protest. None of the great powers would take the lead, as each hoped to see his neighbor involved in a quarrel with Britain. If the Netherlands took the lead, they would not only risk the loss of the Indies, but would become subservient to some other great power, probably Germany. To try to save the Boers at the certain cost of Netherlands independence did not make sense.

The Netherlands government under Kuyper weakly attempted to render such service to the Boers as they could. This modest display of activity had far-reaching consequences in foreign politics. The attitude both of the Government and the people created an impression of strong anti-British feeling among the Netherlands. Other powers sought to profit from the situation. In a letter to Queen Wilhelmina on March 27, 1900, the German emperor, William II, spoke of the "necessity of having a strong fleet sailing the seas." "As soon as this is realized," he added, "the flags of the House of Orange and of the House of Brandenburg will fly side by side on the

Oceans as in the days of old!" Imperial fantasy played havoc with history, for there never were such "days of old," but the meaning was clear. Antagonism between Britain and Germany was growing, and to oppose the one was to invite unwelcome attentions from the other. At that time Great Britain was no more able to protect the Netherlands against the German army, than Germany was to protect the Indies against the British navy. That settled the issue in favor of neutrality.

But the ball had been started rolling. Every incident in Netherland politics was interpreted by diplomatic gossip as an attempt at penetration by one of the great powers. If there were no attempts at penetration, there was at least pressure. Documents already published from the archives of London, Paris, and Berlin, as well as the memoirs of many diplomats show how close was the attention given to the Netherlands and the Indies. An impudent word or gesture by a high Dutch official, and London and Paris imagined the Netherlands a member of the Triple Alliance of Berlin, Rome, and Vienna. Any ripple in British-German relations, and the advisability of occupying the North Sea coast was discussed by Prussian generals, who apparently had their own version of the flags of Orange and Brandenburg flying side by side. Kuyper's pro-Boer agitation and some of his actions had, rightly or wrongly, created the impression that he sympathized with Germany. From this rather scanty evidence, generals and diplomats in both camps drew the unwarranted conclusion that the Netherlands would not oppose the passage of German troops and this set tongues wagging and brains working in all the capitals of Europe. The Netherland government reacted in the only possible way by reinforcing the army and permanent defenses. In 1876 a system of defense against a possible overland invasion had been created. It hinged on a line of inundations running through the province of Utrecht. Advanced posts were built to hold up the invading forces while the inundations were effected. This system was to be completed by modern coastal defenses.

A storm of protests broke over the construction of the latter. They were said to be undertaken at the express demand of the German General Staff to provide Germany with greater security against British landings, and there is little doubt that German complaints had been made about the state of these coastal defenses. The whole affair was slightly absurd, for in case of an Anglo-German conflict, the British army would certainly prefer the well-equipped ports of its French ally to the treacherous sandy coasts of Holland and Zeeland. While a violent discussion raged in numerous European newspapers, the editors of which, we are told, received some compensation from the secret funds of various governments, the agents of the great munition makers of Europe intrigued in the Netherlands for orders.

Thanks to Hendrick Colijn in these trying circumstances, a reorganization of the Dutch army was carried through.

These diplomatic sensations had another more important result. For more than sixty years, since 1890, the Netherland people had lived in a defeatist frame of mind. Was there really any purpose in a spirited defense, if the country were invaded? The doubts of foreign diplomats as to any Dutch reaction to invasion, were certainly based on the fact that the nation had shown so little interest in its own defenses. Shortly before 1914 a more determined attitude prevailed. The worst phase of the policy of passive neutrality had passed.<sup>66</sup>

In 1914, Belgium was invaded and for four years was a theater of war. The Netherlands escaped Belgium's fate by a narrow margin. The German armies moved round the southern point of Limburg instead of passing through as provided in an alternative plan. In the British Cabinet it was proposed to rush aid to Belgium via the Scheldt that is through Netherland territory, but this was rejected. Again and again the nation was on the verge of being drawn into the conflict. Fortunately, none of the belligerents was seriously interested in a change in the status of the Netherlands. In fact, the existence of this bit of neutral territory between the belligerents was in many respects convenient to both parties.

The Dutch army was mobilized at the first signs of approaching war. This mobilization, ordered on July 31, 1914, preceded by a few hours those of France, Russia and Germany. The military force assembled was impressive, but as was revealed long afterwards its equipment was in pitiful condition. There was a lack of ammunition and no provision had been made for its manufacture; the guns were of most diverse models, requiring different types of shells; and the permanent fortifications were hopelessly out of date. "The traditional bravery of the Dutch soldier will make up for their deficient equipment," was the sole consolation offered to young officers who complained about the armament of their troops. To be sure, the government started feverishly to improve defenses, but the absence of war industries and indeed of all heavy industry, made the nation dependent for its military supplies on the belligerents.<sup>67</sup> Communications with the United States soon became insecure, and the Dutch buying in small quantities could not compete with the British and French in the American munitions market. Gradually the material condition of the army improved but the progress of time and the long suspense made it increasingly difficult to keep up the spirit of the troops, which at first had been excellent.

Four years of mobilization had placed a heavy financial burden on the people, but this was offset by a sudden increase in prosperity. Before the war, in 1913, the total revenue of the Dutch state in Europe had amounted



to 227,423,000 guilders. Expenditures had exceeded that amount by 11,300,000 guilders. In 1916, after two years of war in Europe, the government's revenue had risen to 310,000,000, an increase of 40%, and its expenditures to 532,531,000, an increase of more than 100%. In 1918, the situation was still worse. A revenue of 561,000,000 amounted to little more than half of the expenditures which were 1,051,000,000 guilders. After the war public finances were stabilized at a level of about 700,000,000 guilders annual revenue. Taxation had increased enormously during the war, but the nation carried the heavier burden of the 1920's more easily perhaps than it had the far lighter one of 1913. The rise in revenue and expenditure was due in part to widespread currency devaluation, in part to increased prosperity.

For about two years internal politics came to a standstill. All efforts were concentrated on defense. Then as the war continued and people became accustomed to periodical crises caused by repeated attempts of the belligerents to wrest concessions from neutrals, normal political life resumed its course. In a short time it became evident that democratic tendencies had been greatly strengthened by events abroad. A revision of the constitution, planned before the war, was carried into effect in 1917. This revision introduced universal suffrage and provided for woman suffrage to be enacted by Parliament, as was done in 1919. It reorganized the First Chamber by making the qualifications of candidates the same for both houses. Finally, it reorganized the electoral system by proportional representation. Another section granted complete equality to public and private schools. All schools meeting the legal requirements would be subsidized equally from the public funds. Twenty years after this revision which satisfied prolonged popular demand, the majority of elementary schools were denominational.<sup>68</sup>

The introduction of universal suffrage was one of the chief demands of the Socialist Party. It did not however bring them the gains they expected. The party which derived the greatest benefit was the Roman Catholic. It soon formed the strongest party in Parliament, with 30 out of 100 seats. The Socialists who had 18 seats, won 22, becoming the second largest party. The older political groups seemed to be on the decline. The year 1917 brought a socialist revolution in Russia; the next year another in Germany. Under their influence the revolutionary ideal revived in the hearts of some members of the Social Democratic Party, who for more than twenty years had suppressed it as impractical.

Hunger, especially among the poorer sections of the population in the large cities, caused revolutionary outbreaks in the early months of 1918. Troops intervened and people were shot. A few units of the army, bored by standing at arms for years, were on the verge of mutiny. The possibility of

a successful revolution seemed great, and Pieter J. Troelstra called upon his followers to force the government to give way to a Socialist administration. He stood alone among the leaders of Socialism, and counter-demonstrations had restored political stability in a few days. The small Communist group staged a demonstration in Amsterdam, where shots were fired and one man killed. That was all. But the attempted revolution did great harm in internal politics. It created deep distrust between the democratic, denominational parties and the Social Democrats, making cooperation infinitely more difficult than it had been.

This most unfortunate incident strengthened the hands of conservative elements in the Netherlands. In 1918, the Liberals seemed crushed beyond all hope of recovery. Their three factions together had only fifteen seats out of a hundred in the Chamber. Apparently the Liberal era had come to an end. This was only partly true. The indirect influence of the Liberal groups remained strong, for most leaders of finance and of commerce and the majority of higher officials, especially in the judiciary and in the foreign service were their adherents. They no longer formed a popular party, but a burgher aristocracy, and although the political power of this aristocracy was small, its social and economic strength was enormous. One must realize this to understand the internal developments in the Netherlands after 1920. The leaders of the denominational parties usually controlled political power, but they could exercise it only through high administrative officials and with the help of economic leaders who belonged to the Liberal minority.<sup>69</sup>

The new political leaders were naturally influenced by their surroundings, and at times it seemed that the change of leadership had been a triumph for Liberal economic conceptions. Many members of the denominational parties, although unable to give precise reasons for their discontent, grew restless and balked at their own leadership. The old antithesis between the burgher aristocracy and the burgher democracy seemed to be revived. The Liberals, who in their early years had represented the anti-oligarchic tradition of 1572, 1747 and 1795, were now firmly established in the higher positions of the country and tended to close and narrow their ranks just as the revolutionaries of 1572 had done when they had gained power. The expectation that Liberal control would be broken by the new regime was sadly disappointed. The twenty years between the two world wars constituted a period of uninterrupted "Rightist" rule. From what has been said before it is evident that the terms "Rightist" and "Leftist" in Dutch political history do not mean "conservative" and "progressive-democratic," but indicate a basic difference in the conception of state and society. The Rightist groups adhere to the religious point of view that

both state and society are subject to divine laws; the Leftists ignore religious conceptions as fundamentals of government and statesmanship. The elections of 1918 did not give the Rightist groups an absolute majority. Their predominance in the following four-year period was dependent upon the opposition between the two Leftist groups, the Liberals and the Socialists. From 1922 until the outbreak of the war in 1940 the Rightists *did* have a clear majority, but dissension among the three parties composing that majority prevented the regular working of the parliamentary system. The consequence was that a few men dominated internal Dutch politics. Although a premier is unknown to the constitution, the founder of the Cabinet holds a pre-eminent position in the Council of Ministers. Parliamentary cabinets being the exception, he must have extraordinary personal influence, which further strengthens his position.

The Rightists started on their twenty-year period of administration with a cabinet under Ruys de Beerenbrouck. Ruys, a nobleman of Guelderland, was the first Catholic to hold this prominent position in Netherland politics since the founding of the kingdom. There had been Catholic ministers, but never Catholic leadership. After the elections of 1922 the Cabinet continued with certain changes as the second Ruys Government. In this Cabinet the Ministry of Finance fell to Dirk J. De Geer, a descendant of the great promoter of Swedish industry in the XVIIth century. A proposal to strengthen the navy led to his resignation, and he was replaced by Hendrik Colijn. Again the Cabinet was reconstructed as the third Ruys Ministry. It made way for the first Colijn administration after the elections of 1925. After three and a half months this Cabinet fell in a sudden outburst of long buried antagonism between Calvinists and Catholics. It was succeeded by the first De Geer Cabinet. The elections of 1929 resulted in the formation of the fourth Ruys Cabinet with De Geer again in the post of Minister of Finance. This Cabinet faced the storm of the economic depression, which caused the formation of a new administration on a broader basis, the second Colijn Cabinet. This Cabinet was succeeded after the elections of 1937 by the third Colijn Cabinet. The year 1939 brought a "national government," in which Socialists participated for the first time. It was formed by former minister De Geer and was thus the second De Geer Cabinet.

In this whole period only three men succeeded in forming administrations. Others were asked, but failed. This might have been natural under a two-party system, but not in a country where in 1929 thirty-seven political groups presented candidates at the polls, and representatives of nine parties were elected. This was the result of proportional representation. By 1933, *thirteen* parties were represented in a parliament numbering only one hundred members. This enormously increased the difficulty of forming a

cabinet. The modest salaries paid to members of the government did not attract people who could earn many times more in less disagreeable offices. Strong personalities who might have been attracted by the power connected with office, did not welcome a task where freedom of action was hindered by the absence of a regular parliamentary majority.

Only a total revision of the existing party system could bring relief. As it was, the dissatisfaction of party members was rarely expressed by shifting their allegiance to other parties. They formed new parties! For religious reasons the ultra-democratic group among the Catholics would not join the Socialists. They formed a Catholic Democratic Party which was occasionally represented in parliament. The "anti-popery" Calvinists never dreamed of abandoning the maxims of Groen and Kuyper, but formed three or four new parties, each of which in its own way stood for a purified political Calvinism. It was a representative of one of these groups who brought down the first Colijn Cabinet by forcing his co-religionists in parliament to vote "for or against Rome." The Communists barked at the heels of the Socialists, to be attacked themselves by ultra-radical anarchist groups. The Liberals alone succeeded in reforming their badly broken line, and this saved them from what might have been complete elimination by 1922. In between larger groups and their rebellious satellites were ranged "independents," the "Farmers Party," the "National Revival Group,"—forerunners of Fascism in something more than name—and so many others.

In spite of the rank growth of the prevailing system, a general reorganization of political alliances was out of the question. The educational issue had been decided in favor of the denominational groups, and many of the Leftists were glad to be rid of the problem. All political parties, except the Liberals, had anchored their programs so firmly in theology or philosophy that only by breaking this relation could conditions be changed. Few problems involving fundamental principles arose after 1920. The Catholics dropped their demand for the suppression of the last traces of religious inequality so as not to irritate their Protestant allies; and the latter took care not to overemphasize the official Calvinist character of the nation. Tradition and fear of the unknown kept the masses of the people in the political allegiances of their fathers. It was as much a sin for a Socialist to vote the Catholic ticket, as for a Catholic to vote for a Socialist.

Proportional representation made party ties more binding as elections were no longer contests between candidates but between programs. The power of party leaders increased. Compulsory voting—introduced by the constitutional revision of 1917—further strengthened their hands by sending thousands to the polls who had little personal interest in the elections. Small groups of electors whose task it was in the primaries to bring new

candidates to the front or to eliminate representatives who were no longer wanted, could get no further by the greatest exertion than adding a new name at the tail end of the party list. Candidates favored by the party leaders were given well protected places at the top of the list. Proportional representation had its merits, but with the progress of time it became clear that an intermediary system combining the advantage of proportional representation with direct contact between the individual candidate and the people of his district must be devised.

The twenty years between the two wars can be divided into three periods. The first was that of transition from the pre-war to the post-war system. It ended with the second constitutional revision in 1922. The second ran from 1922 to the depression, which occurred in the Netherlands in 1931. The third continued until the invasion of 1940.

The first period, when Ruys de Beerenbrouck was leader of the administration with Mgr. Nolens, the leader of the Catholic faction in parliament as his "*eminence grise*," was one of optimism, of work for a better future, and of generous spending. At the very outset the administration was confronted with a most delicate problem. Belgium, no longer neutral after the German invasion of 1914, complained to the Paris Peace Conference that her defense was seriously impaired by the line of the Belgian-Dutch boundary drawn under the agreement of 1839. She asked that the Dutch province of Limburg and the districts of Zeeland-Flanders situated south of the Scheldt, be turned over to her in exchange for German territory to be annexed by the Netherlands. The Hague immediately retorted that the Netherlands, at peace with Germany, could not annex the territory of their neighbor; quite apart from this consideration they were unwilling to cede one square inch of territory. After a few anxious months, the Netherlands government saw its steadfastness rewarded by a decision of the Conference against territorial changes in the Low Countries.

This first post-war period brought rapid advances in social legislation, and finally another revision of the Constitution. Only five years had elapsed since the revision of 1917, but in these five years much had happened. All the German ruling houses had been dethroned. Among these princes were the next heirs to the throne of the Netherlands after Queen Wilhelmina's only daughter, Princess Juliana. In those same years, a stream of publications from the archives of Petrograd and Berlin revealed the dangers of leaving questions of war and peace to the arbitrary decisions of monarchs. No one, to be sure, could accuse Queen Wilhelmina of having interfered with foreign policy, let alone having abused her constitutional right to declare war, but the times demanded that this right be transferred to the representatives of the people. Finally, a new conception of colonial admin-

istration had developed which required readjustment of the relation between the Netherlands and the East Indies. These were the points covered by the revision of 1922.

With the exclusion of all of Queen Wilhelmina's distant relatives from the succession, a new problem arose; what course should be followed if the only remaining heir to the throne died? After prolonged discussion a motion to decide the eventual question of monarchy or republic by a plebiscite was defeated, and a paragraph was inserted in the Constitution giving the States General the power to elect a new king. The conclusion of treaties with foreign powers and the power to declare war, were made subject to the approval of the States General. More important was a slight change in the first article of the Constitution. This article had formerly read: "The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of the Kingdom in Europe and its possessions overseas." This was changed to: "The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of the Kingdom in Europe, the Netherlands Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao." This opened the way for complete equality between the Netherlands and the Netherlands colonies.

The first steps in this direction had been taken in 1916, when the Netherlands government proposed and parliament passed a bill for limited self-government in the Indies. A "People's Chamber" was instituted which had little legislative power and did not represent the masses of Indonesia's inhabitants, but obliged the East Indian administration to give an account of its actions to the public. The scope of the reform was widened a few years later, and a larger representation was granted to Indonesians elected by local representative councils. Thus the reform of the central East Indian administration was closely connected with the decentralization of government authority and the introduction of local self-government. The constitutional revision of 1922 paved the way for further reforms and necessitated a revision of the Administrative Act of 1854, which was replaced in 1925 by the East Indian Constitution.

This new Act limited the participation of European authorities in East Indian affairs to a few well defined cases. The Dutch Parliament at home retained the power to veto the East Indian budget as a whole, but the details could be discussed only by the People's Council, which received quasi-parliamentary rights and in practice widened its influence still further. The assurance that their opposition to unpopular executive decisions would probably be backed by the parliamentary opposition at home, gave critics of the East Indian administration in Batavia a moral support that the governor-general could not ignore. The share of Indonesians in the government was increased in 1927, when a majority of seats in the People's Council was reserved for Indonesians, and five seats more, out of a total of sixty,

set aside for representatives of non-Indonesians, such as Chinese and Arabs.

Besides this officially fostered autonomy, nationalism was growing in the Indies, and had done so in Java since 1912. It sprang from two different sources: Javanese pride in their cultural traditions, and Mohammedanism. The former was important to the higher class Javanese; the latter was associated by the masses with an agitation against Chinese predominance in retail trade. Originally neither movement was revolutionary, but the second fell under the influence of the extreme radicalism that spread over the world after the last war. Its chances were spoiled, however, by a premature revolt which was easily suppressed in 1926.<sup>70</sup>

Never had the importance of the East Indies to the Netherlands in Europe been so great as in the years following the last war. Previously only a trickle of emigrants had gone to the East. Most of them returned after twenty years or so in the tropics, some having acquired wealth. When the Indies were opened to free enterprise the picture changed. The number of Europeans living in the East Indies doubled within thirty years after 1870. Around 1930 there were probably 50,000 Netherlanders born in Europe living in the East. In the years of prosperity between 1920 and 1930 most of them stayed only a short time, so that there was a constant flow back and forth between Europe and Asia. Today there is hardly anyone among the city population of the Netherlands without friends or relations who are or have been in the Indies. Contact between the two parts of the kingdom became intimate. The boom period also caused an increased influx of Dutch capital—much of which was lost in the depression—and by 1930 the East Indian Government had floated many loans in Amsterdam to a total of about one billion guilders.

Far greater were the returns from East Indian enterprises. In 1926 agricultural enterprises alone, largely in the hands of Netherlanders, paid dividends of 187,000,000 guilders. To this sum must be added 132,000,000 guilders from other enterprises and 40,000,000 guilders for payments to directors and senior staff in Europe. Free enterprise, without resorting to the crude methods of the XIXth century, had earned 359,000,000 guilders in one year. In the same year, the East Indian Government paid 93,000,000 guilders in pensions and furlough allowances. Most of this money also went to the Netherlands. It is evident that most of this income represented only the normal interest on the billions of guilders invested in the Indies, the rest being the ordinary reward of labor. Even so, investments in the Indies were highly profitable—but only for so long as the boom lasted.

In view of the financial importance of the East Indies, the government considered a strengthening of Dutch naval forces in the archipelago of primary importance. A storm of protest rose. The administration—the second

Ruys Cabinet—was violently attacked for proposing new armaments only a few months after the Netherlands' entry into the League of Nations, which had evoked dreams of general disarmament. Moreover, the first post-war boom was already on the decline. The second Ruys Cabinet stuck to their guns. To strengthen the government, Hendrik Colijn was made minister of Finance, but the anti-militarist agitation increased in violence. Colijn, formerly a high executive of the *Bataafsche*, a subsidiary of the Shell group, was not exactly the person to placate the Socialist and Liberal Democratic opposition. "International Trusts," "colonial imperialism," "militarism," and other terms adorned with choice epithets were used by the opposition. With an economic crisis threatening the Netherlands, it was indeed not easy to explain why hundreds of millions should be spent on battleships and cruisers, which it would cost hundreds of millions more to maintain. Yet, there were urgent reasons for the government's decision. The independence of the country was at stake. During the first decade of the XXth century the Netherlands had been unable to move without endangering the independence of the home country or risking the overseas territories. The Indies needed a naval force of their own capable of protecting the island world whatever happened in Europe. The events of 1940 have demonstrated this clearly. Astute Dutch politicians reasoned that the Netherlands in Europe, a point of vital strategic interest, would be protected by the mutual distrust of its neighbors for each other. This comfortable if not convincing thought did not apply to the kingdom in Asia. But the people did not see matters in this light and, under popular pressure, ten members of the Catholic Party joined the opposition. The Navy Bill was defeated.

Unfortunately, this led to another period of political unrest. In 1925, an Anti-Popery outburst broke the coalition of the Catholic and Christian Historical Parties, and with it all hope for a strong administration. For four years, reduction of expenditure was the first concern of the government. It was a time of prosperity, but the leaders of the state proceeded cautiously. They could not have maintained their positions without the tacit support of the Anti-Revolutionary and Catholic Parties, among which caution and a desire to consolidate achievements had replaced earlier democratic endeavors. The third period, which started with the depression of 1931, brought this clearly to light. The economic crisis came later to the Netherlands than to most countries. The national economic structure was basically sound, but in the midst of the general catastrophe, escape was impossible. There was a huge loss on American investments and a goodly portion of the billions of guilders laid out there vanished forever. The East Indies, deprived of markets for their raw material, were severely hit. In 1932 the dividends sent to Europe from the East fell to 31,000,000 guilders and then



to 26,000,000, or less than ten percent of what they had been. Losses affected production and trade in the home country. The most serious aspect of the crisis for the Netherlands was the total collapse of the German economy, for trade relations between the Netherlands and Germany had been close. In 1928 Germany provided 27% of all Netherland imports and took 23% of the total exports. More than two billion guilders, invested by Netherlanders in German loans, enterprises and institutions were blocked and virtually lost. The crisis of 1931 and the subsequent German restrictions on the transfer of money to foreign countries broke the backbone of Netherland economic life, after the catastrophe in the United States and in the Indies had destroyed its outer structure. Unemployment rose to fantastic proportions. Out of a total population of eight millions 500,000 people were without work.

Even so, the Netherlands was spared the worst. No major banking concern or industrial enterprise collapsed. No one was in danger of starvation. Help was provided by government agencies, and additional relief by private charity. In these circumstances the leadership of the Ruys Cabinet proved too weak. In 1933 the reins of government fell again to Hendrik Colijn, who remained in office until 1939. Colijn, the successor of Abraham Kuyper, the hero of the "small people," as leader of the anti-revolutionary party, set to work to rebuild Netherland economic life. He succeeded by strict adherence to conservative economic doctrine. Even after Great Britain had set the example, he postponed devaluation as long as he could and carried through a policy of "adaptation," or reduction of the standard of living which among certain classes made him the best hated man in the country. Yet he scored remarkable electoral successes. In 1927, the Anti-Revolutionary group in the Second Chamber had only 13 members. In 1933 it had 14 and 17 in 1937. The thousands of electors who transferred their votes to the Calvinist-democratic group were certainly not all converts to the theological and social views of its founders. Most of them came from the decaying Liberal groups. They did not vote the Anti-Revolutionary ticket, they voted for Colijn. By his economic policy, Colijn made the Anti-Revolutionary group the standard-bearers of conservatism. Revolt among his own followers threatened and the gains of the small "Anti-Popery" faction was a sign of trouble.

Colijn's policy may have been initially sound. It is a matter of opinion whether it should have been maintained as long as it was. It had some very unpleasant and undemocratic aspects that should have been avoided, or remedied by Parliament. But Colijn carried on. At times, the days of the old oligarchy seemed to have returned. In the words of Wagenaar already quoted, "the wisdom of those who knew and could judge alone decided

what was the true interest of the masses." This attitude was given exaggerated expression in Colijn's broadcast after the Munich crisis of 1938, when he comforted his listeners with the assurance that the immediate danger of war had passed and concluded, like a father speaking to little children, "and now go to bed without fear, and sleep well."

The opposition to Colijn failed to crystallize. There was unrest in the Catholic Party; dissatisfaction among Anti-Revolutionaries; and the Socialists, left without influence on public affairs, vainly sought to arouse the masses with plans to provide work for all, and with attacks on the "ultra-capitalist" system of Colijn. The growing tension of foreign relations, the influx of political refugees from Germany, and the constant agitation of Nazis and anti-Nazis created additional discontent. Then it was that imitators of Hitler and Mussolini thought the moment ripe to swing the Dutch people into line with the totalitarian front.

The Nazi and Fascist organizers made a fundamental mistake. They imported from abroad a dictatorial form of leadership totally alien to the Dutch mentality. They might have seen that the country was already restive under the strong personal leadership of Mr. Colijn. They might have studied history and found on every page that Netherlanders were strong individualists and would never bow to a makeshift dictator. Anton Mussert, leader of the National Socialist Movement, was the only one of a number of would-be dictators who gained any considerable following.

This he achieved by the vagueness of his principles, by shifting from one point of view to another, so that all the discontented elements who thought "what this country needs is a Hitler," could join without sacrificing their personal opinions. Mussert's elusive attitude is nowhere clearer than in his approach to the Jewish issue, where he shifted from neutrality to anti-semitism according to his momentary relations with his German prototypes. Mussert's party reached its peak in the 1935 election when it obtained 8% of the votes cast. Then Hitler's brutality in dealing with political opponents—Socialists and Catholics—and his persecution of the Jews caused a vehement reaction. Two years after its initial success the party was reduced to 4.2%, and two years later it had fallen to 3.7%. This caused Mussert to turn to violent revolution with foreign support for the achievement of his aims. The financing of his political campaigns and of his newspapers became increasingly difficult. At this time he probably accepted money from Berlin to continue and it is noteworthy that he became violently anti-semitic.

Viewed from the political angle, the picture of the contemporary Netherlands is not impressive, but the antithesis between cultural and political development is remarkable. While the latter was rigid, slow and tradi-

tional, the former was vivid, restless, always innovating. Literature attracted more attention in those twenty years than perhaps ever before. Dutch publishers showed amazing industry and enterprise, and succeeded in finding a buying public for many serious works, even at high prices. In painting there were no really great artists, but here also interest was general. Even from a social point of view the outlook in the Netherlands was bright, in spite of the misery caused by the depression. Infant mortality was 3.9% lower than in any other country. The death rate placed the Netherlands in the front rank with Canada and New Zealand, and there was a remarkable contrast between the birth rate in the Netherlands and that of neighboring countries. The latter was at least 25% and sometimes 50% higher in the Netherlands and stood at 20 per 1,000 inhabitants. Indeed, the problem of over-population became more and more threatening. Under the German occupation the population has passed the nine million mark and the density of population, about 640 per square mile, exceeds that of any of the United States, except Rhode Island.

This population trend was foreseen, and the Netherland people undertook the gigantic task of extending the inhabitable area of the country by draining the Zuiderzee. The labor, the cost and the technical difficulties involved in this fantastic project have often been recorded. When the work is completed—two of the four *polders* are ready now—900 square miles will have been added to the territory of the kingdom. Begun in 1918 the work progressed rapidly up to the invasion, and even war has not prevented its continuance. When the Zuiderzee has been finally drained, the Dutch people will have recovered from the sea an area larger than that lost in the course of the last five thousand years. The total losses since earliest times are estimated at 2,243 square miles. The square miles recovered before 1917 numbered 1,305. The draining of the Zuiderzee will leave a net gain of about thirty-eight square miles.

## Epilogue on the War

IN 1940 war came to the Netherlands for the first time in more than a hundred years. The last campaign fought by Netherland troops in Europe had been the ten days war against Belgium in 1831, in which less than 300 Dutch soldiers were killed. After 1839, the Netherlands had gone back to neutrality. Since the Burgundian period, neutrality had been an axiom of foreign policy for large groups of Netherlanders. On this policy the entire nation was in virtual agreement, opinions varying only as to the degree of passivity towards world events.

From 1890 until 1920 the foreign policy of the Netherlands had been completely passive. In 1920, when the kingdom joined the League of Nations, this passive neutrality was deliberately discarded. The importance of this departure from traditional policy is borne out by the debates preceding it in parliament. Under the Covenant of the League, the Netherland state bound itself to take part in armed conflicts, at least by allowing foreign troops to pass through their territory and by joining in economic sanctions. A strong group of representatives contended that the advantages to be derived from membership in the League did not justify such a reversal of traditional policy. The majority protested that the country of Hugo Grotius could not stand aloof from an organization for the maintenance of peace, when an attempt was made to substitute law for force in the settlement of international disputes. "Idealists," was the retort of their opponents. "Small nations should hesitate to assume far-reaching international commitments, they must leave these matters to the great powers who have the force and therefore the responsibility. Small nations must not attempt to play a role in international politics." Some of these arguments had been raised in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries by the merchant princes of Amsterdam, and it is striking to find the historian of Amsterdam, the late Professor Brugmans, strongly supporting these views.<sup>71</sup> The "idealists" were in the majority, but the opposition did not fail to point out vacancies in the new council of world affairs. Were the Netherlands to give up their neutrality, while great powers like the United States did not? The government took this criticism to heart and only took action when it seemed clear that the League was not to be merely an instrument of French hegemony, and that

other great powers, especially Great Britain, would cooperate. The same debate recurred when the protocol of Geneva came up for discussion.

The "idealists" were obviously right. When Great Britain and France, the two most powerful neighbors of the Netherlands joined the League and the door was left ajar for Germany to join, the Netherlands could not afford to stand aloof. Although the nation might feel secure with all danger from the east removed and Belgian pretensions successfully resisted, there was no guarantee that conditions would remain so favorable. From the Dutch point of view the general situation had deteriorated in the Southwest Pacific. Japan had gained enormously by the European War. China, in constant turmoil since the revolution of 1911, displayed unusual interest in Chinese citizens abroad, hundreds of thousands of whom lived in the East Indies.

During the third decade of the century Netherland participation in League affairs was cautious. The Dutch representatives at many international conferences contributed to the common task to the best of their ability. Major political conflicts or questions of principle did not arise. During these ten years the Netherlands were chiefly concerned with some of the after effects of the Treaty of Versailles. The Peace Conference had decided to leave unchanged the Dutch-Belgian boundary and had left the settlement of other problems arising from Belgium's new international status to direct negotiations between the two Lowland kingdoms. Other changes resulted from the new control of the Rhine in which France had gained an important part.

Long negotiations with Belgium led to the drafting of a treaty which was accepted by both foreign offices and ratified by the Belgian Parliament. When its provisions became known, a storm of protest rose in the Netherlands. The treaty was said to be unduly favorable to Belgium. The main objection was an undertaking to build at Dutch expense a canal from Antwerp to Moerdijk, south of Dordrecht, to give direct access from the lower Rhine to the Belgian port. It was contended that this canal would ruin Rotterdam, an obvious exaggeration, and that there was no reason why Dutch taxpayers should pay for a canal useful only to Belgium, an equally obvious truth. The Second Chamber of the States General accepted the treaty after prolonged debate. The First Chamber rejected it, the most momentous decision that body had taken in the hundred and thirty years of its existence. The Belgian problem remained unsettled.

Numerous opponents of the treaty were undoubtedly influenced by the very close political and military ties between Belgium and France during those ten years. Belgium was depicted as a French outpost, a pawn of that great power in European politics. Strength was lent to this view by the fact

that the Netherlands had to resist claims of the Rhine-Navigation Commission—controlled by a French-Belgian majority—to control Dutch territorial waters under the Treaty of Versailles, to which the Netherlands were not a party. Too cordial cooperation with Belgium might suggest that the Netherlands had also been drawn into the French bloc. This criticism although exaggerated was comprehensible in a country that had sacrificed its neutrality on the altar of a world peace and not for any particular group of nations.

In 1925, the sixth assembly of the League of Nations took up the problem of disarmament. A preparatory committee was appointed. On this committee the Netherlands delegate, Mr. John Loudon, was elected chairman. The story of the Disarmament Conference need not be told here. While agreeing on the principle of disarmament the great powers could not agree on its application, and were suspected by the other powers of making the conference a diplomatic battleground to test their strength. At the actual Disarmament Conference in 1932, total rather than partial limitation of war material was supported whole-heartedly only by the Scandinavian States and the Netherlands. The attitude of the great powers continued to arouse the criticism of smaller states. Finally at the suggestion of the Spanish representative, de Madariaga, this resulted in the formation of an eight power group—Spain, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands—to oppose the growing tendency of the great powers to settle important questions among themselves, leaving the smaller states no alternative but to accept their decision.

The Disarmament Conference was a last desperate effort to arrive at cooperation between the European powers. The hope that the states of Europe might form an alliance or even a federation had faded a few years previously. In 1930 M. Briand had again suggested that the powers of Europe consider the establishment of such a federal bond without, as he said, "affecting the sovereignty of any of the nations belonging to the organization." In view of recent events, the reply of the Netherlands has great significance, especially as they were the only state to stress a point now considered of primary importance. Their answer was that the proposed cooperation could succeed only in so far as States were willing to limit the exercise of their sovereign rights. "A conception of sovereignty leaving no room for the voluntary acceptance of certain limitations must be declared incompatible with the very nature of international relations." The modern attitude that sovereignty is not absolute, but relative and naturally limited, is clearly expressed here. The Netherlands, in agreement with a number of other powers, disapproved of Briand's plan in that it seemed to create a European bloc that might lead to inter-continental friction.

Dreams of a more peaceful and prosperous Europe vanished in the depression that shook the whole economic and political structure of Europe to its very foundations. The years from 1930 to 1933 form a real turning point in Dutch history. The Netherlands, relatively secure in Europe, faced a grave crisis in the Far East. Japan started to attack white supremacy in Asia as soon as Europe was shaken by the economic catastrophe. Her attack was both military and economic. The Japanese army invaded Manchuria, and Japan began to undersell European and American producers, conquering new markets and fresh spheres of influence. One of the main objects of Japan's economic attack was the Netherlands Indies, where imports from Japan were only 11% of the total import in 1929, rising in 1934 to 34%. In the same period exports of Dutch cotton goods to the Indies fell from 25 to 7% of the total import. Japan's progress was continuous. It was difficult to object to Japanese imports in an area the Netherlands themselves had always proudly proclaimed to be open to free competition, even though the Japanese trade was completely one-sided. Japan exported to the Indies, but did not import from them any substantial amount of raw materials. Japanese penetration tended further to upset the already precarious economic position of the islands and seriously impaired the welfare of the population. Moreover, the concomitant military attack on China revealed broader and more sinister aims.

The proposal of the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Stimson, that all powers interested in the Far East should consult on ways and means to prevent Japanese aggression from gaining momentum, was all to the advantage of the Netherlands. But as soon as Washington's invitation to take part in such a consultation reached The Hague, the deplorable consequences of the rejection of the Naval Bill in 1925 became evident. The extreme weakness of East Indian defenses, a mere police force, prevented the Netherlands from supporting Mr. Stimson's move. Not even a gesture of sympathy with the American point of view was feasible when it became known that the London Foreign Office did not intend to associate itself with Mr. Stimson's views. The Manchuria affair was a death blow to collective security. That any great power could violate the status quo with impunity, if it did not antagonize enough other great powers, was the lesson of the Far Eastern crisis. In the past the Netherlands had relied largely upon Great Britain to maintain the status quo in the East Indies. The events of 1931 and 1932 indicated a radical change in Far Eastern relations, and the Netherlands were faced with new problems.

A strengthening of the Dutch army and navy in the Far East was urgently needed, but the possibility of large armament credits seemed more remote than ever before. The Netherlands in Europe were confronted with

extensive unemployment, and the revenues of the East Indian administration had been cut in half by the economic crisis. The World Economic Conference in London of 1933 failed. Mr. Colijn vainly warned the delegates that ruthless economic warfare threatened. He was able to point out that while others *talked* about trade barriers the Netherlands and Belgium had begun to reduce customs duties by the treaty of Ouchy-Lausanne of 1932. Public opinion in both countries reacted favorably and business circles eagerly discussed a customs union of the Low Countries.

A few months later the kingdom of the Netherlands took another interesting initiative. On September 29, 1933, at the fourteenth assembly of the League of Nations, it called attention to the problem of German refugees, and urged international collaboration for their re-settlement. The results were meager. Then came the fateful year of 1935, which tested the League of Nations sanctions against aggression. The Netherlands among others voted for sanctions and an oil embargo against Italy, while the majority of the great powers held aloof. There was considerable internal opposition to this participation in the Ethiopian conflict. The Netherlands had now departed from the strict neutrality so scrupulously observed until 1920, and various powerful groups in the nation demanded the adoption of a position like that of Switzerland, which enjoyed a privileged neutral status within the League. These groups found adherents not only among the few pro-Fascists, but also among business men who feared the deterioration of foreign trade. But the government, supported by parliament and the majority of the nation, faithfully executed its obligations under the Covenant.

The pitiful result of the sanctions against Italy, played into the hands of the "isolationists." Great Britain and France prepared to acknowledge the new situation in Ethiopia, if not *de jure*, at least *de facto*. The smaller nations felt duped by this arbitrary decision of the great powers. Their disillusion was voiced by the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs speaking in the name of his own country and of the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. In a broadcast he declared that the confidence of the small states in the effectiveness of the League's measures had been greatly shaken, but that they would uphold international law as long as possible. Consequently, when an Ethiopian delegation sought admission to the meeting of the League in the fall of 1936 and when Italian opposition to such admission was apparently supported by France and Great Britain on the ground that the Ethiopian credentials were invalid, several of the smaller states—including the Netherlands and one of the British dominions, backed the attempt of the Soviet Union to have the Ethiopian delegation admitted. The Russian proposal was adopted by an overwhelming majority, but the



disillusion of the smaller powers was complete. The system of collective security had collapsed.

Soon afterwards the Netherlands met with further disappointment in their promotion of international cooperation. The "Oslo group" held a trade-barrier conference at The Hague in July 1937 to study the reduction of tariffs and quota in international trade. There was some difficulty in formulating practicable plans for the group as a whole, but the individual member states set an example by reducing tariffs and modifying the quota system not only for other members of the group, but also for the great powers, Britain, France and Germany, and in one instance the United States. The great powers showed a singular lack of appreciation for these gestures of good will. Their negative attitude smothered the movement for the removal of trade barriers before it could develop.

Economic cooperation by the Oslo powers might have led to political cooperation. The declaration made by the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs after the collapse of the anti-Italian sanctions seemed to anticipate such a possibility. It was further indicated by the change in the character of the League of Nations. From a supposedly world organization, it had become a mere bloc of nations, dominated by France and Great Britain and more or less supported by Russia, but opposed to the ex-members of the League, Japan, Germany and Italy. The great powers did not always place League interests above their own, and the smaller nations who had participated in the sanctions against one of them felt they had been let down by the great powers. A basic change of attitude among them was the result. Their best chance of security now lay in the formation of a bloc of small nations.

This was no easy task as the prospective members of such a bloc were scattered. Czechoslovakia and Poland had alliances with one or more of the great powers and were in a different position to that of Scandinavia and the Low Countries. National traditions hampered effective cooperation among the five States concerned. The government in Berlin, growing bolder with the progress of German rearmament, watched developments on its northern and eastern boundaries sharply. Newspaper reports of political cooperation by the Oslo states caused Goebbels to denounce the scheme as an "encirclement of Germany." In January 1937, Hitler took personal notice of the situation when he offered "to recognize Belgium and the Netherlands as neutral regions for all time" and to guarantee their territorial integrity. The Netherlands rejected this suggestion which, whatever its value, would have modified the international status of the country. The integrity of the Dutch territory was not subject to discussion. It was not dependent on alien guarantees and the acceptance of Hitler's offer would

have given Germany the right to supervise the international relations of the Netherlands.

The Oslo states never attempted organized political cooperation although their action was occasionally concerted, as for instance with regard to the recognition of the king of Italy as emperor of Ethiopia. It is sad to record that not even a limited coordination of effort between Belgium and the Netherlands was realized. Both states hurriedly strengthened their defenses, both revised their relationship to the League of Nations in an effort to return to their pre-war neutrality policy. In March 1937, the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands officially declared that the article of the covenant providing for free passage through the territory of member states of troops engaged against a power declared by the League to be an aggressor, was no longer considered binding by the Netherlands. Belgium was released from its obligations under the treaty of Locarno by Britain and France, and returned to neutrality. The Scandinavian states adopted a similar policy.

The League of Nations had failed. The smaller countries are commonly blamed for having returned to neutrality at a time when war was rapidly approaching and the liberty of their peoples was at stake. It is easy to be wise after the event. Should the small nations have gone to war against Germany by themselves? They were obviously not strong enough, and had they been strong enough there would have been no need to resort to war. Should they have allied themselves with the great powers? What had been the attitude of Great Britain in 1931? Of France in 1935? Of the United States and Great Britain on the oil embargo against Italy? By remaining neutral they could at best only delay their destruction. By overt action they would only have hastened it and played into Hitler's hands. He would have had some sort of justification for the attacks he planned. To be effective the military cooperation between the Low Countries and the western powers ought to have been prepared two or three years before the war, yet who can blame them for not siding with Britain and France in 1937 and 1938? What would have been the fate of the Netherlands if they had done so? That of Czechoslovakia?

In the closing days of August 1939 the German government ordered its ambassador at The Hague to deliver a lengthy statement of its willingness to respect the neutrality of the Netherlands. The conditional character of the declaration was overemphasized. The British government submitted an identical statement, in shorter form and clearer terms. It also contained the conditional clause, "so long as Dutch neutrality is respected by the enemy." Such declarations were little more than assurances of momentary peaceful intentions. Neutrality cannot be exactly defined. New prob-

lems are bound to arise from modern warfare to demand constant clarification and the interpretation, adopted by the neutral state, may not be acceptable to all the belligerents. Recognition of the neutrality of a neighboring state would seem to imply, therefore, a willingness to discuss new problems in a friendly spirit, with the avowed intention of arriving at a peaceful settlement.

The Netherlands were beset by many problems during the few months they were allowed to remain neutral. Shipping and imports of essential foodstuffs and raw materials were hampered—unduly so in the opinion of the Netherlands Foreign Office—by the allied blockade. Ships were sunk by German torpedoes and German mines, and reparations often refused. The air above the Netherlands was used by the war planes of both sides in violation of international agreements. Apologies were occasionally tendered. None of these violations of neutrality was considered sufficient to justify entering the war. The government in The Hague held them to be intentional or unintentional acts of individuals transgressing their orders, or, in the case of the blockade, to be based on a different interpretation of international law, that called for negotiation before action. A *casus belli* would arise only if one of the belligerents invaded the territory of the Netherlands deliberately and in force.

Despite its gravity the notorious incident at Venlo on November 9, 1940, when two British subjects accompanied by an officer of the Dutch army were shot and kidnaped on Dutch soil, was looked upon as an act of the Gestapo without the knowledge of the German government. It took a good deal of imagination to accept this theory. The German Foreign Office may have been unaware of the plot, as Mr. van Kleffens suggests in his book on the Netherlands and the war, but this can hardly be believed of the Nazi leaders.<sup>72</sup> The German authorities never denied the shooting and kidnapping on Dutch soil, and even sought to justify their action by accusing the Netherlands Foreign Office of participation in a British plot "to murder Hitler." The British agents captured at Venlo were firmly convinced that they had established contact with anti-Nazi German officers. The conference planned at Venlo was at least the third in a series of unofficial negotiations between the British and the "anti-Nazis." There is little doubt that the latter were in reality agents of the Gestapo. The British Intelligence Service had fallen into a trap set by the Hitler government to obtain information as to eventual peace conditions. The Netherlands were involved only to the extent that the Intelligence Section of the Dutch General Staff refused to permit such negotiations unless their own representatives were present. In doing this the General Staff went as far as it could to foster peace negotiations, well aware that only a timely peace could save the Low Coun-

tries from war. The distribution of German Panzer divisions along the eastern boundary left no doubt as to the direction and aims of the coming attack.

About the time of the Venlo incident, the queen of the Netherlands and the king of Belgium made a joint offer of mediation to the belligerents. This unusual gesture was prompted by reports from Germany that a general attack was planned for early in the morning of Sunday, November 12th. These reports were based on troop movements observed during preceding days. It was difficult to believe that the German General Staff would start operations in the worst season of the year, when the roads of south-eastern Belgium are nearly impassible, the soil of the Netherlands is saturated with water, and days are shortening rapidly. The alarm was so serious, however, that all defense lines in the Low Countries were manned, which was exactly what the German General Staff wanted as it gave their agents an excellent opportunity to complete their data. The excellence of the German espionage system was revealed a few months later when a briefcase lost by a German diplomat enroute to Berlin was picked up by a working man and handed over to the Dutch authorities. It contained a lengthy and minute description of Dutch defenses.

Under these circumstances there could be no reasonable objection to an exchange of views between Dutch and Belgian military authorities. Yet the only document available on Dutch-Belgian military cooperation indicates that no staff talks were undertaken. On March 30, 1940, the Dutch commander-in-chief, General Winkelman, forwarded a memorandum to Brussels, to be transmitted to the Belgian government immediately after the beginning of hostilities. This memorandum explained the disposition of the Dutch troops, which had been withdrawn to the western section of the country when it became evident that the Belgians would concentrate their troops along the "K.W. line" between Namur and Antwerp, instead of defending the Meuse line. These dispositions, General Winkelman added, could not be changed at the last minute and the Netherlands and Belgium would be obliged to fight their own battles without concerted action. General Winkelman deplored the fact that the Belgian withdrawal to the "K.W. line" prevented the establishment of an unbroken front from the Zuiderzee to the Ardennes. Events in France showed that this unbroken front strategy suited German tactics admirably. The "hinge" at which the Belgian and Dutch sections of the line joined would have been on the flat, sandy ground south of Weert, exactly the spot best suited for an attack by mechanized forces and easily within the reach of the German Army east of the Meuse. The inevitable breakthrough here would have put an end to organized Lowland resistance on the first or second day.

From this point of view, the absence of coordinated military action may have been beneficial to the Allied cause.

The invasion of Norway in April 1940 might have dissipated the last scruples of the Lowland governments in regard to joint military arrangements. A coordination of defense with France and Britain might then have been considered perfectly justified. Mr. Colijn, no longer in office, urged it upon the Netherland Government. Neutrality had lost its *raison d'être*. The difficulty was to convince the people that participation in the war had become inevitable. This done, what would the Low Countries gain by their drastic change of attitude? The German army stood poised for the attack. It could easily have fought the two campaigns in Norway and in the Netherlands together. What help was to be expected from Britain and France? Active participation would burden the governments in The Hague and Brussels with direct responsibility for the extension of hostilities, and give enemy propaganda a valuable opportunity to influence opinion in the United States. If the governments of the two Lowland countries were ready to abandon neutrality, would it be wise to do so? Could the western powers provide effective aid? The best answer to this is another quotation from Mr. Eelco van Kleffens. "Twice," he writes, "I had a discussion on the subject with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill. He was completely frank and various measures of assistance were at once taken, but they could not be extensive enough to save the situation. . . . These discussions . . . gave me the certainty that even if we could have had any prearranged plans with the Allies for common defense . . . we would have obtained no more help than we obtained now. No more was available." Evidently the most prudent policy was to remain neutral, strengthen the defenses, and wait.

The attack came on May 10, at dawn. The invading army is estimated by a Swiss military authority at more than twenty divisions, forming the XVIIIth army, under General von Kuechler. This estimate seems high. Dutch military intelligence reported nearly forty German divisions between the North Sea and Aachen, but the majority were intended for the invasion of Belgium through the Dutch province of Limburg. This would have left some eighteen divisions for the attack on the Dutch positions. This is only a guess. Our information on events after May 10 is still of the scantiest.

The Dutch army consisted of eleven ordinary divisions, one light mechanized division, regiments of territorial and supply troops, altogether about 300,000 men. Of these one brigade was posted in the extreme northeastern corner, near Delfzijl, to guard the narrow entrance into the Netherlands between the sea and the peatmoors, through which Louis of Nassau had

invaded the northern provinces in 1568. This weak force could only delay the attack. Four hours' resistance was the most the Dutch High Command dared to expect. South of the peatmoors of Drente the boundary was virtually undefended. A line of machine gun nests behind the River IJssel about fifty miles to the west formed the first line of resistance. Near Arnhem, this line ran close to the frontier. It was continued beyond the Rhine to the Waal and from there behind the Waal-Meuse canal to the Meuse itself. It followed that river as far as the Belgian frontier. A similar Belgian line ran behind the Meuse to Maastricht, where it joined the strong fortifications behind the Albert Canal. This was the outer ring of the defense. Behind it a second line running from the Zuiderzee followed the rivulets Eem and Grebbe, crossed the Rhine, Waal, and Meuse, being strengthened between the rivers by inundations, and then ran due south through Brabant towards the Belgian frontier. There it ended, rather abruptly from a strategic point of view. The plan called for a cordon of troops to be drawn up east-west along the Belgian frontier, but this can have been no more than a token force. The memorandum of General Winkelman already mentioned shows that positions south of the riverbelt were only weakly held, and most troops had been withdrawn behind the Eem-Grebbe-Waal-Merwede-Haringvliet line. This front could be shortened by further withdrawing the troops from the Grebbe to behind the inundations running from Naarden via Utrecht to Gorkum. The First Army Corps, which had guarded the coast during the months of neutrality, was to form a general reserve.

The Dutch General Staff clearly saw the necessity of withdrawing its army behind the inundations where it became apparent that direct coordination of defense with the Belgians was impossible. Under these circumstances it is difficult to understand why the main body of the army was ordered to make its stand behind the weaker Grebbe line instead of behind the inundations. The leaders of 1672, faced with a similar problem, rejected the idea of resistance at the Grebbe for exactly the reasons that caused the collapse of that line in 1940. In his memorandum General Winkelman had said that he preferred the Grebbe because it offered better possibilities for counterattack. These tactics were courageous but unrealistic in view of the overwhelming superiority of the enemy in numbers and equipment. The inundation line had been extensively written up in the months preceding the battle. It was claimed to be impassible, and the sudden defeat of the Dutch army led to unfounded criticism of this means of defense. Indications are not lacking that the Germans considered the inundations a formidable obstacle. They adopted the same method of defense against the Anglo-American invasion in 1944. In 1940 the Germans used large scale

parachutist attacks far in advance of their motorized columns to neutralize the Dutch positions from the rear. This was the only case in the summer campaign of 1940 in which paratroop attacks were made on a large scale. In less than twelve hours the Germans dumped at least one and possibly two airborne divisions on the western provinces of the Netherlands. The only other place on the western front at which paratroops were used in any number was west of Maastricht, in the attack on the fortress of Eben-Eymael, and there the attackers came down in companies rather than divisions. The mission of the airborne troops was to surround and conquer The Hague, capture the queen and government, and occupy all bridges and roads connecting The Hague with the mainland of Brabant at Delft, Rotterdam, Dordrecht, and Moerdijk. The way would thus be paved for Panzer troops to take the bridges over the Meuse near Grave by surprise and rush forward through 's Hertogenbosch. The road between that town and Moerdijk is narrow and winding, but as the Netherlands did not expect any immediate penetration there, it was not obstructed and could be passed in a few hours. The main invading force was to make a simultaneous frontal attack on the Grebbe line and in the north on the new dyke between Friesland and Holland. If all went well for Hitler, the strategic points in the Netherlands would be occupied in twenty-four hours and the Dutch army surrounded. But things did not go according to plan.

The paratroop attack came as a complete surprise. In an hour the three main airfields around The Hague were occupied by the invaders. Farther to the south the airport of Waalhaven was captured and used to bring reinforcements. Fighting broke out at the bridges of Dordrecht. At Moerdijk the attack was successful, supported as it was by troops landing from barges that had moved down the rivers before the real invasion began. All kinds of disguises, even Dutch uniforms were used to camouflage the penetration of these advance units. A ship which had entered Rotterdam a few days before flying the Swedish flag, debarked artillery for the paratroops landed at Rotterdam. Confusion reigned in southern Holland. Colonel Moorman, commandant of The Hague, hastily gathered all available troops to protect the Government and break the ring around the capital. The First Army Corps was ordered to turn inland from the coast, and the British and French were asked for help. But the entrances to the Dutch rivers were blocked by magnetic mines dropped from German planes during the night. Everything depended on a single factor: would the Dutch reserves be able to wipe out the airborne invaders before the main enemy forces joined them along the Moerdijk bridges?

The story of the subsequent fighting has often been told. The Dutch forces fought splendidly and did more than had been expected of them.

A German attempt to rush armored trains over the Meuse bridges to prevent their destruction and disrupt fortified positions in the rear, failed. Only one train got through, rushed on into central Brabant and then, being too far in advance of the infantry, moved back only to be destroyed near the village of Mill. Dutch machine gun nests which prevented the crossing of the Meuse were silenced by artillery fire from inside Germany, and the Nazi infantry got across in rubber boats but not without losses. In the southern part of Limburg the Germans crossed at Roermond and captured the Belgian Meuse bridge at Maeseyck; they crossed also at Maastricht where the bridges had been blown up but little resistance was offered. By the end of the day German troops had engaged the Netherlands along the Peel line, which was also threatened by a flanking movement from the south. The enemy advance here did not exceed ten to fifteen miles, and the Moerdijk bridges were still far away.

Farther to the north the invaders were held up during the morning by the defenders of the Maas-Waal canal. They crossed in the afternoon. The same thing happened in Guelderland and Overijssel, where rearguard actions slowed down the invasion so that only by the end of the day did the enemy occupy Arnhem. His advance units were feeling their way to the Grebbe line. In the far north, the garrison of Delfzijl blocked the way of the invaders for a number of hours and during the afternoon succeeded in partly disengaging themselves. Speeding back towards the Zuiderzee, they crossed the new dyke during the night.

During this whole day the Germans sought desperately to achieve their objects around The Hague. New waves of paratroops descended. The first drifted down in the early afternoon. Small parties of German soldiers were landed from planes on the beaches north of The Hague, but had the bad luck to arrive just as the Dutch destroyer Van Galen was cruising by, and its guns blew their planes to pieces. One airfield was reconquered, the two others rendered useless. The German general commanding the airborne division, General von Sponeck, was shot down with his plane and killed. The attacks on Delft were beaten off and the paratroops annihilated. In Rotterdam a violent counterattack by Dutch marines threw the invaders back to the airport. The destroyer Van Galen supported the attack with its guns until it fell a victim to dive bomber attacks. For hours the small ship braved the German bombs, going down only after the thirty-second attack. Around Dordrecht, Dutch and German forces were locked in fierce fighting for the bridges. Only at Moerdijk was the enemy in complete control.

However precarious its position, the Dutch high command could feel fairly satisfied at the end of the first day. Its plans had been completely upset by the airborne invasion, but the enemy's attempt to annihilate Dutch



resistance on the very first day had been completely frustrated. If the British and French came in time, part of the country might be held. Again that evening and night the Germans launched air attacks on The Hague and Rotterdam. Side by side with German paratroopers, fifth columnists went to work. Dutch Nazis and German residents fought Dutch troops in the streets of both cities during the morning hours of May 11. Allied troops failed to appear as soon as the Dutch had hoped. General Henri Giraud's Seventh Army was hurrying through Flanders to Zeeland and Antwerp. As his columns entered Brabant, they were fiercely attacked by German planes. His advance units easily reached the railroad between 's Hertogenbosch and Eindhoven, but the main body of his motorized forces only got as far as Breda in the morning of May 12. His principal objective was to retake the Moerdijk bridges. This would enable us to cut off and eliminate the Germans clinging to the airport and bridges of Rotterdam.

The fate of the Netherlands depended on the results of the second and third days of fighting. May 11 dawned with fierce German attacks all along the line. In the north the bridgehead covering the entrance to the great dyke was bombed and shelled; the Dutch defenders were driven by dive bombers from behind the inundations protecting it and in the afternoon, an attempt was made to storm the dyke itself, but the Germans were repulsed with bloody losses. Here the Dutch positions seemed safe. In the center contact was made along the Grebbe line in the morning. Its southern end was under heavy artillery fire in the afternoon. Bombardment was followed by infantry attacks on the outer bulwark of Wageningen which was taken. In Brabant, the Dutch had occupied new positions behind the canal from the Meuse to Helmond, the *Zuid Willemsvaart*, where they were shelled and attacked during the afternoon. In the evening they withdrew to avoid an encircling movement from the south. German Panzers entered Tilburg, apparently from the southeast. The French advance units joined in the retreat. The result was catastrophic, for with the occupation of 's Hertogenbosch a direct route to Moerdijk was opened to the German motorized troops.

According to the German communiqué an armored S.S. division was ordered to push along this road, and the selection of such specially trained and toughened fighters indicates the importance attached by the German High Command to this forward thrust. The operation was risky, for Giraud's Seventh Army might attack the Panzers on their flank. The impetuous French commander must have considered such an attack, for on Sunday, May 12, at ten o'clock in the morning he ordered the town of Breda evacuated. He planned to use the old residence of the Nassaus as a bulwark to hold up the advance of the Germans coming from the east,

while his left wing struck out to the northeast to engage the paratroops holding the Moerdijk bridge for the Panzers. Forty thousand civilians moved out of the town, on foot, as the use of cars or vehicles was forbidden. Fortunately most of them did not go far, but remained hidden in the woods south and southwest of the town. About ten thousand reached Antwerp, and a few thousand were carried along in the stream of refugees flooding the roads into France and finally reached the shores of the Mediterranean beyond Montpellier. Suddenly, however, Giraud changed his drastic plan. His left wing had attacked the German Moerdijk bridgehead near Zevenbergen, and the Dutch defenders of the Peel, now badly disorganized, were being reformed behind the French army. General Giraud ordered his mechanized units to withdraw to his main army, now in position before Antwerp along the Dutch-Belgian boundary. His position was difficult, his communications with French General Headquarters were of the poorest. At one moment he tried to reach them by telephone via The Hague and the Dutch embassy in Paris! His decision to rejoin the main Anglo-Belgian-French line from Antwerp to the Meuse may have been perfectly justified, but it left Zeeland uncovered. Looking back it may be asked what the Seventh Army achieved? In the actual event, it merely wore out its mechanized equipment and exhausted its men.

The S.S. Panzer division pushing on Moerdijk reached its objective in the course of the third day. The Dutch position was breached immediately. The German strategic plan had succeeded, albeit with two full days' delay. This was the more to be deplored because at other points the Dutch defense had been relatively successful. The central part of Holland was cleared of paratroops. The southern half of Rotterdam was lost, but a front had been established running east and west through the city. The river Meuse, where luxury liners were burning and freighters sinking, formed the battle line. In the north the defenders of the great dyke had scored complete success. The Germans collected barges and small steamers to cross the Zuiderzee and land on the undefended eastern shores of Holland, but the Dutch organized a "Zuiderzee Fleet" consisting of one torpedo boat, three gunboats, two minesweepers, and small craft, supported by British and French torpedo boats. This weak force had great difficulty in resisting the constant attacks of German dive bombers, but it succeeded in preventing all attempts to cross the Zuiderzee.

That same day the principal battle of the campaign was fought on the Grebbe. The Germans attacked the line again at its southern point. Their main objective was the small and beautiful town of Rhenen. This was a full dress onslaught, with dive bombers and fighter planes machine gunning the Dutch positions, followed by tanks and flame throwers preceding the

infantry. The Dutch line was broken at one point. A counterattack was partially successful, but the Dutch commander realized that his troops could not possibly hold out. On the morning of May 13 the general situation was so unsatisfactory that, at the urgent request of the commander-in-chief, the queen decided to leave the country to continue the struggle from London and to administer from there the overseas territories. No defense was possible against the German armored troops crossing the Moerdijk bridges in force. During the day the German attack was renewed on all sides. The northeastern front, the dyke and the Zuiderzee were still firmly held by the defenders. In the center the Grebbe line was again broken. The Dutch retreated a few miles, counterattacked unsuccessfully, and then withdrew towards the inundation line. Near Dordrecht the valiant defenders of the bridges were overwhelmed by Panzer troops, who cleared the way to Rotterdam.

The government decided to follow the queen to London. Full powers were given to the commander-in-chief, General Winkelman. He could not long conceal the seriousness of the situation. The weakened defenders of the Grebbe had no time to regroup behind the inundations. The official Dutch report indicates that in the confusion, the Germans succeeded in breaking through this line at one point. By noon on May 14, the fifth day of the campaign, General Winkelman decided to capitulate. After he had sent a flag of truce and negotiations had started, the German air force criminally bombarded the center of Rotterdam "to break a passage for the armored troops," who no longer needed it. This murderous air assault was meant to intimidate the population. The capitulation had already been decided before the bombardment, because the Dutch positions were hopeless. The effect of the bombardment was the reverse of what the Germans intended. Great as was the loss in life and property to the Dutch, it cost the Germans far more. By the wanton destruction of the city they brought the same evil upon themselves.

General Winkelman surrendered with all the troops in the Fortress of Holland. In Zeeland the campaign continued. The remnants of the Dutch Peel army, combined with French units, retarded the occupation of the islands for five days more. Details of the fighting are imperfectly known. The German air force bombed Flushing to prevent the French from withdrawing to Belgium, and Middelburg for no reason whatever. Treasures of art and history were lost in this little town. Culturally its destruction was a far greater loss than that of Rotterdam. On May fourteenth all was over in the European Netherlands.

The war continued from England; the Dutch flag was still flying in the East and West Indies. Two years later Batavia fell to the Japanese, after a

bitter struggle in which the renown of the Dutch navy, air force, and army spread through all the United Nations. The Indies were never wholly lost. In southern New Guinea, in the primitive town of Merauke Dutch authority has remained intact to this day, and with the American offensive making rapid progress, it may be assumed that the Dutch red, white, and blue will never be hauled down in this little corner of the world.

To write a "history" of the Netherlands under German occupation is still impossible. We have a great deal of information; some and in many respects the most important parts of it cannot be divulged. We know of the despair of the people in the sad summer months of 1940, of the political and spiritual revival that followed, culminating in the great strike of February 1941. We know that the methods of the invaders under that arch-traitor Seyss-Inquart have changed for the worse since the first few months, when there was a great display of moderation. Cruder methods were employed after the great strike, but only cautiously as Germany's younger soldiers were in Russia, and the occupation forces consisted of older men and half trained S.A. members. With the rebuilding of a western German army repression became harsh. The persecution of the Jews, the destruction of coastal towns and villages for defense purposes, the flooding of large areas for the same reason, the resistance of the underground workers and the activity of the underground press, all this must find its place in a history of the occupied Netherlands; in another volume to be published after the war.

It is evident that none of the great traditions of the Dutch nation described in these pages has been lost. Those traditions are a potent force in the reconstruction of the Netherland state and society. The thoroughness of the Dutch, their prudence in action, their unshakable confidence in their own conception of the good life, their deep religious faith, their Erasmian tradition of tolerance, their yearning for social justice, their abhorrence of vain display, have all been made clear under German occupation. Upon these foundations, the kingdom of the Netherlands will be rebuilt.✓

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A chronology of the oldest Netherland history is difficult to give. The older dates are necessarily hypothetical but the following estimates do not seem exaggerated:

ab. 30,000 B.C. Last glacial period in the Netherlands (only in the northern part).

ab. 20,000 B.C. Last glacial period in Europe, the Netherlands a tundra-area. Oldest inhabitants of the Netherlands (reindeer-hunters of the Cro-Magnon race).

ab. 15,000—

8,000 B.C. Period of the palaeolithicum (rare traces of habitation).

ab. 8,000—5,000 Warmer climate, western part of the Netherlands submerged by the sea. No habitation (?).

ab. 5,000 Warm period. Sea breaks through the Straits of Dover and forms a wall of dunes along Dutch coast.

ab. 2,500—2,000 Climate is dry. Inhabitants in Drente (Hunebed-people) and in southern Limburg.

ab. 1,500 Wandering tribes spread over central Netherlands.

ab. 1,000 Beginning of the Iron Age. Germanic and Celtic immigrations.

ab. 500 Beginning of the moist, warm period of the Sub-Atlanticum (present climate).

300—500 A.D. Period of highest floods.

<sup>2</sup> The anthropological problems of the Netherlands and the literature pertaining to them are discussed by D. J. H. Nyessen, *The Passing of the Frisians. Anthropogeography of Terpsia*, The Hague, 1927. The outstanding experts on Dutch archeology are J. H. Holwerda, *Nederlands vroegste geschiedenis*, Amsterdam, 1918, and *Die Nederlanden in der Vorgeschichte Europas*, Leipzig, 1915; and A. E. van Giffen, *De Hunebedden in Nederland*, 2 vols. Utrecht, 1925—1927 and *Die Bauart der Einzelgraber, ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der älteren individuellen Grabhügelkulturen in den Niederlanden*, Leipzig, 1930. Holwarda presented his latest views on the subject in volume I of the *Geschiedenis van Nederland* edited by H. Brugmans, Amsterdam, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> On the relations between the Frisians and the Anglo-Saxons P. C. Boeles, "*Friesland tot de elfde eeuw*," The Hague, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> There are various theories on the origin and initial form of the mark, but a discussion of them does not belong to Netherland history proper.

<sup>5</sup> "Frisia" indicates the whole original Frisian area, from Bruges in Flanders to Hamburg and beyond in Schleswig.

<sup>6</sup> For the meaning of the name "Holland," see Robert Fruin, *De etymologie van Holland (Verspreide Geschriften*, vol. VIII, p. 139) and the *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek* ed. by E. Verwijs-S. Verdam, vol. III, The Hague, 1894.

<sup>7</sup> J. van Mierlo in *Geschiedenis der Letterkunde der Nederlanden*, ed. by F. Baur, vol. I, 's Hertogenbosch, 1939, defends the existence that an older Dutch literature than the one that has come down to us, but this remains largely theory.

<sup>8</sup> The definition quoted in the text was formulated by the late professor I. H. Gosses in the *Handboek tot de Staatkundige Geschiedenis van Nederland*, The Hague, 1927 (sec. ed.).

<sup>9</sup> The problem of the "discovery" referred to in the text, has been widely discussed, but the latest research on this point makes the role played by Willem Beukelszoon rather doubtful.

<sup>10</sup> The impact of the Hundred Years' War on the political situation in the Low Countries

has been thoroughly studied by Prof. Henry S. Lucas (University of Washington) in his book, *The Low Countries and the Hundred Years' War*, Ann Arbor, 1929.

This book deals minutely with the first decades of the conflict.

<sup>11</sup> The following families reigned over the countries of Holland and Zeeland: from 922 (traditional date) to 1299 the native descendants of the Gerulfs and Dirks of Kennemerland; from 1299 to 1345, the Avesnes of Hainaut; from 1345 to 1433, the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria; from 1433, the Burgundians of the House of Valois.

<sup>12</sup> Each province had its groups of partusans, all known in Dutch history under traditional, often enigmatic names. In Holland the *Hoekschen* opposed the *Kabeljauwschen*, in Friesland the *Schieringers* opposed the *Vetkooopers*. The partusans in Guelder and Utrecht derived their name from the leading aristocratic families in the former, the *Heeckerens* stood against the *Bronkhorsten*; in the latter, the *Lichtenbergs* against the *Lokhorsten*.

<sup>13</sup> Prof. E. Lousse of the university of Louvain delivered a series of lectures on the organization of the medieval state, published in mimeographed copies, *L'Etat corporatif au moyen âge et à l'époque moderne*, 1938. His thesis emphasizes the "corporative" character of the medieval state, but the use of this term explains little and tends to confuse the historical issue. In 1933 he published a program of studies on the origin of the States Assemblies in the Low Countries, in the *Revue de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Louvain*.

<sup>14</sup> The Burgundian dynasty was represented in the Low Countries by Duke Philip I (the Bold), who ruled Burgundy from 1363 and Flanders from 1385 to 1404. His son, John (Jean sans Peur) succeeded him in Burgundy and Flanders, 1404-1419, his second son Anthony in Brabant and Limburg, 1404-1415. His grandson, Philip II (the Good), succeeded his father in Burgundy and Flanders, 1419-1467; his cousins in Brabant and Limburg (1430) and in Holland, Zeeland and Hainaut (1433). All these domains were inherited by Philip's son, Charles the Bold, 1467-1477.

<sup>15</sup> The older Dutch historians never went deeply into the origins of the Dutch nation. A narrative of political development seemed sufficient. H. Pirenne, in his *Histoire de Belgique*, 7 vols., Bruxelles, 1902-'37, sought to prove that from the earliest days the southern part of the Low Countries had formed an economic bloc, more or less distinct from the adjacent territories. P. Geyl, in his *Geschiedenis van den Nederlandschen Stam*, vol. I-III, Amsterdam, 1930-1937, deliberately based his narrative on the assumption that from early days the modern Dutch-Flemish linguistic unit had formed a national unit. J. Huizinga, in his articles on Burgundy and the origin of the Netherland nation, attaches great importance to incidental political factors (J. Huizinga, *Uit de voorgeschiedenis van ons nationaal besef in De Gids*, 1912, vol. I, p. 432, id. *Burgund, eine Krise des romanisch-germanischen Verhältnisses*, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 148, 1933, p. 1, and id. *L'État Bourguignon, ses rapports avec la France, et les origines d'une nationalité néerlandaise in Moyen Age*, vol. 40, 1930).

<sup>16</sup> Georges Chastellain wrote a chronicle of the dukes of Burgundy for the period of 1419-1470 (*Oeuvres*, publiés par Kervijn de Lettenhove, Brussels, 1863-1866 in 8 vols.).

<sup>17</sup> An American historian, A. Hyma, wrote an excellent book on the development of this religious movement: *The Christian Renaissance*, Grand Rapids, 1924.

<sup>18</sup> Maximilian of Habsburg married Mary of Burgundy in 1477. After her death in 1482 he ruled the Low Countries as regent until 1494, when his son Philip III (the Handsome) succeeded him.

<sup>19</sup> Charles succeeded his father Philip in 1506, and ruled until 1555, for the first nine years under the regency of his grandfather Maximilian who entrusted the Governors of the Low Countries to his daughter Margaret of Austria. In 1515 Charles took Lowland affairs into his own hands, to entrust direct control again to Margaret until her death in 1530. From 1530-1555 Charles's sister Mary of Hungary was Governor.

<sup>20</sup> The identity of the "seventeen provinces" has been discussed by generations of historians. No contemporary sources enumerate them. One of the latest interpretations of this enigmatic number is that "seventeen" should be taken to mean "many" or "all," in the same way as we speak of the "seven seas" (Huizinga in his article in *Moyen Age*, quoted above).

<sup>21</sup> For the position of the nobility of Holland, see the important article by H. Enno van

Gelder, *De Hollandsche adel in den tijd van den opstand* in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, vol. 45, 1930, p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> On these economic and social matters much light has been spread by the research of W. van Ravesteijn, *Onderzoekingen over de economische en sociale ontwikkeling van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, 1916. For exact data on the herring fisheries see, H. Enno van Gelder, *Gegevens betreffende de haringvisserij op het eind van de zestiende eeuw* in *Bydragen van het Historisch Genootschap*, vol. 32, 1918, p. 134.

<sup>23</sup> The text of Erasmus letter, quoted above, is copied from H. M. Allen's edition of Erasmus letters (*Opus Epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, letter of Aug. 31, 1523, vol. V, Oxford, 1924). P. Frédéricq in his *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticæ praviatilis Neerlandicae*, Ghent—The Hague 1879–1906, vol. IV, p. 225 quotes the same letter after an edition of Zwingli's letters. The words following "steadfastness" until "I know it is glorious" are omitted in this early edition which entirely changes the meaning of the text. Netherland and Belgian historians quote the letter after Frédéricq.

<sup>24</sup> The literature on William of Orange is abundant. The best general biography is that of P. J. Blok, *Willem I*, 2 vols. Amsterdam, 1909. W. Rachfahl described the early years of William's career up to 1572 in minute detail: *Wilhelm von Oranien*, Halle—The Hague, 1906–1924, 4 vols. An interesting sketch of William's personality, his attitude towards the problems of his time, is given by A. van Schelven, *Willem van Oranje*, Amsterdam, 1933. The Trecentenary of William's birth in 1933 brought a mass of new literature reviewed by Miss M. W. Jurriaanse in *Nijhoffs Bijdragen*, Series VII, vol. 4, 1934. It also led to a discussion between H. E. van Gelder and J. Gorrin on the attitude of William towards religion (Gorrin in *Historisch Tijdschrift*, 1933 and Van Gelder in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 1933).

<sup>25</sup> The latest and most acceptable explanation of the term *Gueus* and its use in the war of independence is given by J. D. M. Cornelissen, *Waarom zij Geuzen genoemd werden* (*Historische Studien* published by the *Historisch Tijdschrift*, Tilburg, 1938).

<sup>26</sup> Prince Maurice was appointed to the Stadhouderate in 1585 and died in 1625.

<sup>27</sup> A review of successive historical interpretations of the Great Revolt is given by J. Romein in *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog*, Amsterdam, 1941. Among modern Dutch historians H. Enno van Gelder, an outstanding expert on this period of Dutch history, sees the revolt as a revolutionary movement by part of the people, and the "fight for freedom" as a civil war. P. Geyl (*The Revolt of the Netherlands, 1555–1609*, London, 1932, and *The Netherlands Divided, 1609–1648*, London, 1938) looks upon the revolt as a national movement, headed by William of Orange. J. C. De Pater, in his article *De Religie als factor bij de vorming van den Nederlandschen Staat in Nijhoffs Bijdragen*, VII, 8, 1937, and in his greater work on the war, (vol. III and vol. IV of the *Geschiedenis van Nederland*, edited by H. Brugmans, Amsterdam, 1935–1938), thinks religious motives were the most important. J. Romein and others pay special attention to economic causes and the social tensions created by economic changes. In this book an attempt is made to reconcile some of these opinions.

<sup>28</sup> The reasons for the war as propounded by Netherlanders themselves in the XVIth century, have been studied by A. C. J. De Vrankrijker in his interesting book, *De Motivering van den Opstand*, Nijmegen, 1933.

<sup>29</sup> All possessions of William of Orange in the Low Countries were confiscated by the king of Spain in 1567. Some the prince regained through the liberation of his territory from the Spaniards. His lands outside the Low Countries were heavily mortgaged after his expeditions of 1568 and 1572. Part of the debts incurred by the Nassau family for the liberation of the Netherlands, were refunded by the States General in 1598. The family estates on Spanish territory were restored to William's oldest son, Philip William, who remained a Catholic and loyal to Spain. After the death of that prince, these estates fell to prince Maurice and full possession thereof was guaranteed to the House of Orange by the treaties between the Republic and Spain. The income derived by the princes of Orange from services rendered to the Republic further increased their wealth. However, Stadhouder William II was so generous in his support of his brother-in-law, Charles II, that at his death the family was in difficult circumstances.

<sup>30</sup> Not without reason had the spiritual directors of Calvinism, Theodore de Bèze and Calvin

himself, complained of the religious indifference of the States of the Netherland provinces who refused to use their political power to serve the "true Christian creed." More than once had the Protestant clergy led the assault against the Erasmianism of the ruling class; but the latter under the indomitable Oldenbarnevelt in private life a firm believer, had weathered every storm.

<sup>31</sup> E. Baasch, in his *Holländische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Jena, 1927, surveys social conditions in Dutch industry in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, from Dutch sources. Here an extensive bibliography will be found.

<sup>32</sup> This dark picture of Dutch social conditions may surprise readers who are accustomed to see the XVIIth century as the "Golden Age" of Netherland civilization. It must be said, however, that social conditions in the Netherlands, bad as they were, were better than in most of the adjacent countries.

<sup>33</sup> For an exposé of Dutch XVIIth century "imperialism," see J. E. Elias, *Het Voorspel van den eersten Engelschen Oorlog*, 2 vols. The Hague, 1920.

<sup>34</sup> A survey of the development of the Jewish Dutch communities and their economic activities had been published by H. J. Bloom, *The economic activities of the Jews in Amsterdam in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries*, Williamsport, Pa., 1937.

<sup>35</sup> Werner Sombart makes this ridiculous assertion in *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, 2nd ed. Leipzig, 1918, p. 30 (also in English translation).

<sup>36</sup> This was pointed out by J. Huizinga in his booklet, *Die hollandische Kultur des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts, ihre sozialen Grundlagen und nationale Eigenart*, Jena, 1933.

<sup>37</sup> Frederick Henry succeeded his brother Maurice in 1625 and died in 1647.

<sup>38</sup> William was *stadhouder* from 1647 until 1650.

<sup>39</sup> See P. De La Court, *Interest of Holland*, first published at Amsterdam, 1662. A French translation with the misleading title, *Mémoires de Jean De Witt* was printed at The Hague in 1709.

<sup>40</sup> The first Anglo-Dutch War was fought from 1652 to 1654, the second from 1665 to 1667, and the third from 1672 to 1674.

<sup>41</sup> This subject of Dutch German relations has been little studied. A preliminary study has been made by R. E. von Gronow, *Die öffentliche Meinung in Deutschland gegenüber Holland nach 1648*, Marburg, 1914.

<sup>42</sup> The organization of the Dutch navy in the XVIIth century has been thoroughly studied by J. E. Elias, *Schetsen uit de geschiedenis van ons Zeewezen*, 6 vols., The Hague, 1916-1930 (first published in *Nijhoffs Bijdragen*).

<sup>43</sup> The last decades of the XVIIth century form a period of transition. The "Golden Age" really came to an end after the war of 1672-1676. So, many personalities who chronologically belong to the XVIIth century, are mentioned in this chapter entitled "Ideals of the Eighteenth century."

<sup>44</sup> Interesting biographical sketches of some of the scientists, mentioned here, can be found in J. Romein, *Erfliaters onzer Beschaving*, 4 vols., Amsterdam, 1938-1940.

<sup>45</sup> J. Wagenaar's *Geschiedenis des Vaderlands* was first published in 21 vols., Amsterdam, 1749-1760.

<sup>46</sup> William III died in 1702, but Holland, Zeeland and the majority of the provinces did not appoint a new *stadhouder* until 1747. John William Friso, of the Frisian branch of the Nassaus, was appointed *stadhouder* in Friesland, Groningen, and Drente.

<sup>47</sup> The importance of the West Indian colonies is pointed out by the prominent XVIIIth century writer on economic conditions in the Netherlands, E. Luzac, *Holland's Rijkdom*, 4 vols., Leiden, 1780-1783.

<sup>48</sup> William IV, succeeded his father John William Friso in Friesland in 1711. In 1718, he became *stadhouder* of Groningen and in 1722 of Drente and Guelderland.

<sup>49</sup> H. Colenbrander in his three volumes on the Patriot movement (*De Patriotten tijd*, 3 vols., The Hague, 1897-'99) and F. van Wijk in his book, *De Republiek en Amerika*, Leiden, 1921 have thoroughly analyzed the attitude of the Netherland government and people towards the American War of Independence.

<sup>50</sup> The fourth Anglo-Dutch War was fought from 1780 to 1784.



<sup>51</sup> In the French period constitutional changes in the Netherlands were rapid. In 1795 the "Batave Republic" was proclaimed. In 1798 the first Constitution was approved. In 1801, the Constitution was changed to strengthen the executive. In 1804 an authoritarian regime was introduced under Schimmelpenninck as "grand pensionary." This was replaced in 1806 by a monarchy with Louis Bonaparte as "king of Holland." In 1810 the Netherlands were incorporated into the French empire. In 1813 they were liberated.

<sup>52</sup> King William I entered the Netherlands in November 1813, and was proclaimed "Sovereign of the State" on December 5, 1813. The new Constitution was approved in 1814. In 1815, after the union of the Netherlands and Belgium, William took the title of king. The same year a new constitution was adopted. The year 1939 brought the definite separation of Belgium from the Netherlands. King William abdicated in 1840.

<sup>53</sup> For these diplomatic developments, see G. J. Renier, *Great Britain and the establishment of the kingdom of the Netherlands, 1813-1815*, London, 1930, pp. 15-16, 21, 30, 33-37, 217, 221.

<sup>54</sup> Renier, o.c.p. 212 sq.

<sup>55</sup> King William succeeded his father in 1840. He died in 1849.

<sup>56</sup> The Culture System was adopted in 1830 and abolished by the agrarian laws of 1869 and 1870.

<sup>57</sup> The term "socialism" in Dutch politics refers always to Marxist socialism, the term "communism" to Marxism as formulated by the Third International.

<sup>58</sup> B. Landheer, *The Netherlands*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1943, and Hendrik Riemens, *The Netherlands, the story of a Free People*, New York, 1943.

<sup>59</sup> The United States Federal Reserve Bank, in a report on foreign holdings in this country, gave a figure of 1,780,000,000 dollars as the amount of Dutch investments in the United States. Of this amount, only 600,000,000 were investments in the true sense of the word.

<sup>60</sup> See A. J. Barnouw and B. Landheer, *Contribution of Holland to the Sciences*, New York, Querido, 1943.

<sup>61</sup> The third Thorbecke Cabinet resigned in 1872, shortly before the death of the great Liberal Statesmen. It was succeeded by the Liberal De Vries-Cabinet (1872-'74), then by a Conservative Cabinet (Heemskerk, 1874-'77), again by a Liberal administration (Kappeyne, 1877-'79). The divided Liberals permitted successive Conservative administrations: Van Lijnden van Sandenburg, 1879-'83, and Heemskerk, 1883-'87. After the revision of the Constitution in 1887 and the extension of the franchise, the "Rightists," the combined Anti-revolutionary and Catholic groups, formed their first administration (Mackay, 1888-'91). The Liberals remained in office for ten years after a victory at the polls in 1891: Cabinets Tienhoven, 1891-'94, Roell, 1894-'97, and Pierson, 1897-1901.

<sup>62</sup> The Rightist administration of Abraham Kuyper (1901-'05) was followed by a Liberal Cabinet (De Meester, 1905-'08), which in turn was succeeded by the Rightist administration of Heemskerk Jr. 1908-'13. In 1913 the Rightists were defeated in the general elections but the Leftists, now a heterogeneous combination of Liberals and Socialists, could not unite on a common program of action, the Socialists being unwilling to take part in the administration. An extra-parliamentary Cabinet, headed by Cort van der Linden, took charge of the administration until the constitutional revision of 1917 was approved and new elections were held.

<sup>63</sup> A. Vandenbosch, in B. Landheer, *The Netherlands*, p. 135.

<sup>64</sup> H. von Treitschke, *Die Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande* in vol. III of his *Historische und Politische Aufsätze*.

<sup>65</sup> The Netherlands government (Liberal administration-Pierson) sent the cruiser "Gelderland" to Lourenço Marques to bring President Kruger of the South African Republic safely to Europe. The British government made no attempt to prevent this display of sympathy with the cause of the Boers.

<sup>66</sup> The question is often asked why the two Lowland kingdoms did not concert their action for joint defense against eventual aggression. Such a move was impossible before 1914, because of the international status of Belgium whose neutrality was guaranteed by the adjacent

great powers. Belgium was *obliged* to remain neutral, the Netherlands of their own volition accepted neutrality as their foreign policy.

<sup>67</sup> The best source for the study of the Netherland difficulties during the last war, are the memoirs of N. Bosboom, minister of defense, 1913-1916: *In moeilijke omstandigheden*, Amsterdam, 1933.

<sup>68</sup> The Dutch system of education has been explained by the author of this book in an article on *Education in the Netherlands*, in the *Encyclopedia of Modern Education*, New York, Philosophic books Inc. 1943.

<sup>69</sup> A history of the Netherlands in the twenty years that preceded the present war, is still to be written. The above opinions naturally represent the authors personal view on the political development in that period.

<sup>70</sup> A survey of the development of the nationalist movement in the East Indies was given by this author in his book *Nusantara, a history of the East Indian archipelago*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1943.

<sup>71</sup> H. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van Nederland onder Koningin Wilhemina*, Amsterdam, 1938.

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